

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BLAIRSTOWN, NJ

Second Sunday in Lent & Gifts of Women Sunday

10:00 AM

ORDER OF WORSHIP

March 5, 2023

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE:

"Toccata" by Charles Widor

WELCOME, AFFIRMATION OF MISSION STATEMENT & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Gail Weber

*We welcome today's guest, Elise Bates Russell,
the Executive Director of Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center*

AFFIRMATION OF MISSION STATEMENT:

As disciples of Jesus Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, we experience God's unconditional love and we witness to others by discovering and sharing our gifts.

CHORAL INTROIT:

Chancel Choir

* CALL TO WORSHIP: *(Based on Ps. 34: 1-4, 7-8, 14)*

Emily Arena

Leader: I will bless the Lord at all times;

People: God's praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Leader: My soul makes its boast in the Lord;

People: let the humble hear and be glad.

Leader: O magnify the Lord with me,

People: and let us exalt God's name together.

Leader: I sought the Lord and was answered.

People: God delivered me from all my fears.

Leader: The angel of the Lord encamps

People: around those who fear God and delivers them.

Leader: O taste and see that the Lord is good;

People: happy are those who take refuge in God.

Leader: Depart from evil, and do good;

People: seek peace and pursue it.

Leader: With hearts filled with joy and praise on our lips, let us worship God.

* HYMN OF PRAISE: *My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout (vv. 1-3, No. 100, Glory to God)*

***My soul cries out, with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?
My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn. Cont'd.***

* Please stand if you are able

***Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn.
My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.
From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;
there are table spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn.
My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.***

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: *(in unison)*

Abby & Emalee Besser

Loving God we confess that we can be a critical people and hold those with whom we disagree in contempt. Forgive us when we criticize, ostracize, and marginalize those around us, resulting in our failure to embody Christ's inclusive love toward all your children. By your grace, fill us with warmth toward one another. Help us appreciate and be grateful for our siblings in Christ and especially those who do not know Christ, yet who need to experience Christ through the warmth of our words and the kindness of our deeds. In Jesus' gracious and precious name, we pray. Amen

ASSURANCE OF PARDON:

Leader: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him."

People: Let us walk in the light of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Amen.

* CELEBRATION OF CHRIST'S FORGIVENESS:

(v. 1, No 582, Glory to God)

***Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me, and to the Son,
whose grace has pardoned me, and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.***

* EXCHANGE OF CHRIST'S PEACE:

Kaye Evans

GIVING OF OUR GIFTS AND OFFERTORY

* SONG OF GRATITUDE: *No. 592*

Praise God

***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 OF DEDICATION:

Leader: Let us pray together:

People: We return these gifts to you and relinquish our control over them, O God, that you may use them beyond us, beyond this place, and beyond self-interest that your love may abound in the flourishing of every living thing you have entrusted to us. Amen.

DECLARING GOD'S WORD

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON: Ruth 1: 6–18

Elizabeth Topolski

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Acts 16: 11–15

Laura Topolski

ANTHEM: *"We Come Together Here" by James M. Stevens*

Chancel Choir

MEDITATION: *From Ruth to Romona*

Elise Bates Russell

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:

Katelyn, Kelly & Jen McElroy

Leader: Today we celebrate the blessing of God calling women at all stages in life, from diverse ages, languages, cultures, races, backgrounds and in all circumstances. We celebrate God's gifts bestowed upon us, a variety of gifts and services for the common good "activated by one and the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:11). We are grateful . . .

Leader: For women of all ages who serve God and neighbor in committees and on boards, as members, elders and deacons, as mid-council leaders and beyond. For young women, tweens and teens who serve in manifold ways and for the advisors who mentor, listen and hold space for their growth in wisdom and grace. For nominating committees that recognize potential and promise, hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit in all voices, regardless of age.

People: We celebrate and give thanks to God!

Leader: For women who work toward a more just world, one free of biases, discrimination, food insecurity and poverty. For women entrepreneurs, homemakers, students and volunteers who partner and lead, who sit on decision-making boards, who head micro-enterprises, small businesses, nonprofits, corporations, churches and ecclesiastical bodies.

People: We celebrate and give thanks to God!

Leader: For congregations, faith-based organizations and women's rights organizations advocating for and empowering women and girls. For those who work in refugee camps and border ministries. For those who work in helplines and call centers, who provide healthcare and counseling, pastoral care and accompaniment to women and families. For those who offer welcome, affirmation, safety, and care.

People: We give thanks to God for your service and love in action!

Leader: For foremothers, trailblazers, role models, mentors, activists, educators, reformers, innovators, peacemakers, motivators, advocates, coaches, and preachers.

People: We celebrate and give thanks to God!

Leader: We celebrate you and we celebrate the blessing of God's call! We give thanks for the gifts this rich diversity brings to building God's kin-dom. We pray in gratitude and joy, magnifying God for God's favor!

People: Alleluia! Thanks be to God. Amen.

* COMMUNION HYMN: *One Day, Naomi and Ruth Crossed the Border* vv. 1, 4, 5

Tune: (#261 "God of Compassion, in Mercy Befriend Us"); Text: Copyright © 2018 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

One day, Naomi and Ruth crossed the border, Leaving a life filled with sorrow and pain. Cautious yet hopeful, they journeyed together. Bravely, they sought to start over again.

Would there be folks in the land to receive us — Even if some said, "You're not from this place"? Would we cross freely? Would others believe us?

Would people greet us with kindness and grace?

One day, Naomi and Ruth crossed the border, This day, we see streams of new refugees. God, you have called us to welcome the stranger; May we in love welcome people like these.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE:

Erika Wulster

Deacon: Listen to these gracious words of Jesus:

This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.

John 6: 40

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if those who hear my voice open the door, I will come in to them and eat with them, and they with me.

Revelation 3: 20

Deacon: Why have we gathered here?

People: We come because we have been called to live out a story.

Deacon: What story shall we live?

People: The story of God's saving love, revealed in Jesus.

Deacon: Where did this story begin?

People: It was whispered before time began. It was sung in the melody of Creation.

Deacon: Whose story is this?

People: This story is God's alone to tell. It hums in the rivers and the trees. It whispers in the skies and the seas. It calls to the people of all places. It speaks in our hearts and in our lives.

Deacon: Why then should we speak of this story?

People: This story calls our name in Creation and claims our lives through the Cross and the empty tomb, of our redemption. We are it's telling in this time, this space, and this place.

With storytellers of all ages and in all situations

Maggie Morokutti

sing with me the song of our salvation: *No. 355 Hear the Good News of Salvation* v. 1

Hear the good news of salvation: Jesus died to show God's love. Such great kindness! Such great mercy! Come to us from heaven above. Jesus Christ, how much I love You! Jesus Christ, You save from sin! How I love You! Look upon me. Love me still and cleanse within.

OFFERING OF OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS:

Emily Arena

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER:

Teri Harvey

Leader: Let us pray: Holy God, Father Almighty . . . as we pray the prayer Jesus taught, *singing*:

People: "Our Father, who art . . . forever. Amen."

Leader: Tell me the story of this night, of this table?

Elise Bates Russell

People: The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it.

Leader: Tell me what he said and did?

(Breaking of the bread)

People: He said, "This is my body, given and broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Leader: Tell me what he said and did?

(Taking and pouring cup)

People: In the same way, he took the cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

Leader: This is our common story, our deep memory, our true destiny. So let it be our storytelling, our testimony.

People: Let's celebrate the way God's grace has shaped our lives. The feast of God for the people of God, let us eat and drink.

RECEIVING THE ELEMENTS: *Approach the Table, receive the bread, take the cup, and return to your pew.*

Musical Meditation:

Abide With Me

Cellist, Elizabeth Russell

SHARING THE BREAD:

Stephanie Burke

Jesus said, *"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty" (Jn. 6:37)*. Let us eat this bread in remembrance of Christ and may the spirit that is in him be in us also.

DRINKING THE CUP:

Jesus said, *"I am the vine, you are the branches, apart from him, we can do nothing."* Let us drink this cup in remembrance of Christ and may the spirit in which he died be our Spirit.

COMMUNION BLESSING:

Leader: What is our prayer this day?

People: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, so that this everyday meal may become an eternal feast, so that our eating and drinking today may unite us with Christ, whose body and blood are given for us; so that we may know you live in us, and we live in you; so that we may live in your world, knowing that it is indeed your world; in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

DEPARTING IN GOD'S NAME

* HYMN:

O God, You Give Us Grapes and Grain

vv. 1, 4

Tune: (#288 "I Sing the Mighty Power of God"); Text: Copyright © 2022 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

***O God, you give us grapes and grain; you give us salt and oil.
You bless us with refreshing rain and sun — and rich, dark soil.
And so your care for all these things means we can be well-fed.
Creation praises you and sings — as you give wine and bread.
Your Spirit moves across the earth — the earth that you made good.
May we see your creation's worth and love it as we should.
As we now share the bread and wine, as Christ is here anew,
God, give us strength to go and care for all the earth with you.***

* CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE & BENEDICTION:

Jan Swift

*Fast from hurting words and say kind words. ~
Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude. ~
Fast from anger and be filled with patience. ~
Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope. ~
Fast from worries and have trust in God. ~
Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity. ~
Fast from pressures and be prayerful. ~
Fast from bitterness and fill your heart with joy. ~
Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others. ~
Fast from grudges and be reconciled. ~
Fast from words and be silent so you can listen. ~*

Go in Peace.

* CHORAL BENEDICTION:

Chancel Choir

POSTLUDE:

"Hornpipe" by GF Handel

Our Worship has ended — our Christian Witness begins!

Learn more about today's guest, Elise Bates Russell

Elise Bates Russell currently serves chair of the Covenant Committee at Blair Academy on the Board of Trustees and as the executive director of Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center, serving youth, families, non-profit and corporate groups with leadership development, teambuilding, retreats, outdoor education and missional opportunities. She is part of the consultant team for Run River Enterprises and recently served as president of the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association (PCCCA), an organization serving camps and conference centers across the United States and Canada. Her education includes a degree from the College of Wooster and a Masters in Architecture from the University of Michigan. Her passions include leadership development, healthy governance, effective teams and cultural diversity. Elise enjoys hikes with her family, travel, hearing new ideas, being outdoors and meeting people!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deacon Ministry Meeting today following worship! Let's reorganize!

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS): For over 70 years, OGHS has provided Presbyterians a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need around the world. In a world of disaster, hunger, and oppression, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by OGHS — Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People — all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope. We will receive the OGHS Special Offering through Easter, Apr. 9. You may contribute to OGHS electronically on the church website: fpcb-nj.org or by sending your offering to the church.



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

Adult Christian Education DVD Series "The Chosen" is scheduled for today beginning at 4:30 PM at the Outreach Center.

Bible Study: Bible study is scheduled for this Friday, March 10 at 12:30 PM. Contact the church office to be added to our weekly Bible Study email reminders/updates.

Holy Land Presentation: Please join us this Saturday, March 11 for a Covered Dish Breakfast in Fellowship Hall hosted by Presbyterian Women followed by a presentation about the Betsy Peterson's trip to the Holy Land. There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!

Veteran's Towel & Sheet Collection: Presbyterian Women are collecting new towels (washcloths, hand towels, bath towels in colors) and new twin size sheets (extra long) for Veteran's Haven North. Feel free to drop them off at the Outreach Center or bring to Sunday worship through March 19.

Johnsonburg Summer Campships: The Presbyterian Women support children from our church who are interested in attending Johnsonburg summer camp. Any child interested in attending write a letter to Presbyterian Women indicating their reason for wanting to attend camp. Letters should be into the church office by March 31. More information about Johnsonburg summer camp may be found at <https://fpcb-nj.org/summer-campships/>.

ShopRite (\$25/\$100), Acme (\$25/\$100), Dunkin' (\$10), IHOP (\$10), and Panera (\$10) gift cards are available at the OC during office hours. See Gail Weber to order additional cards or if you have any questions about how to support this ministry!

Pedals for Progress: Sunday, April 16 / 12–3 PM. Blair Academy is collecting adult & kids' bikes and sewing machines to send to Togo, Rwanda, Tanzania, Belize and Guatemala. Do your part to put unused bikes and sewing machines to good use in the developing world. Visit P4P.org to read more! A \$20 donation with each bike or sewing machine is requested to offset shipping costs overseas. All material and monetary donations are tax deductible and a receipt will be provided on site. For more info, contact Blair Community Service Coordinator and Church Member, Kaye Evans, at evansk@blair.edu.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS

The Human Family: Persons and individuals impacted by the COVID-19; essential workers; the homeless; people of Afghanistan, Haiti, and the Ukraine; families impacted by gun violence

Men & Women Serving in the Armed Forces & America's Veterans

Those in elected office: The President, the Congress, State Assembly, local community servants

Healing for Friends & Families with:

Cancer: John Abney, Judy Dales, Gordon Dugan, Samantha Elwell, Olivia Hollis, Adam Hubble, Tracy Lance, Troy Lutz, Caitlyn McMorro and her family, Jay Ohland Jr., Bill S., Andrew Shan, Robert Talmadge, Gerry Walker, Tracy Wolfe, Molly Grace Young, Alicia, Audrey, Darlene, Eva, Gail, Liza

Illness & Injuries: Les Ashburner, Sue Bonkowski, Derek Cameron, Elaine Canonico, Kyle Canonico, Lucy Cuipa, Noah Haiduc-Dale, Cameron McIntyre, Carol McLain, Jan Smith, Margaret Stephens, Betty Ann Weir, Ann, Tracy, Carter

ASSISTING DURING TODAY'S WORSHIP

Greeters: Lisa Besser & Kaye Evans

Narthex Ushers: Abby Besser & Emalee Besser

Elevator Usher: Stephanie Burke

Guest: Elise Bates Russell

Pastor: Rev. David Harvey

Ministers: The Congregation

Choir Director: Maggie Morokutti

Musical Meditation: Elizabeth Russell

Sound System: Theo Padavano

MIDI: Frank Wilson

DLP: Jennifer Plut

Coffee Hour: Kaye Evans

Today's Worship Assistants: Emily Arena, Abby Besser, Emalee Besser, Stephanie Burke, Kaye Evans, Teri Harvey, Katelyn McElroy, Kelly McElroy, Jen McElroy, Maggie Morokutti, Jan Swift, Laura Topolski, Elizabeth Topolski, Gail Weber, Erika Wulster

THIS WEEK IN OUR CHURCH

Sunday, Mar. 5: Gifts of Women Sunday

Guest, Elise Bates Russell

8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal
10:00 AM Family Worship
11:15 AM Children's Choir
11:15 AM Deacon Ministry/FH
4:30 PM *The Chosen* @OC/Zoom

Monday, Mar. 6 Office Closed

Tuesday, Mar. 7

7:00 PM CE/M&W @OC/Zoom

Friday, Mar. 10

12:30 PM Bible Study/OC

Saturday, Mar. 11

9:00 AM Presbyterian Women

Sunday, Mar. 12

8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal
10:00 AM Worship
10:15 AM Sunday School/FH
11:15 AM Children's Choir
4:30 PM *The Chosen* @OC/Zoom



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Office Hours: Tuesday – Friday, 9:30 AM – 1:00 PM

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