

First Presbyterian Church
Salem, Ohio

March 15, 2026

10:30 a.m.

4th Sunday in Lent



Worship will be live streamed on
Facebook: First Presbyterian Church of Salem, Ohio,
You Tube: [www.youtube / FPCSALEM](http://www.youtube.com/FPCSALEM); and
our website, www.fpcsaalem.org.

"We are centered in Christ and powered by love."

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

*Please stand if you are able.

PRELUDE

Come Unto Him
Priere

J.H. Maunder
Leon Boellman

*Let us silently turn our hearts, minds, and
bodies to the worship of God as the
light of Christ is brought forward.*

PRELUDE

Larghetto

George Frederick Handel

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please take a moment to sign and pass the Attendance Pad.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

The Lord leads us like a shepherd.

God nourishes our lives and restores our souls.

The Lord is with us, even in the darkest valley.

God's goodness and mercy are always close.

*OPENING PRAYER (*Unison*)

Great God, in you is more love than we can imagine and more grace than we can fathom. You have shown yourself in Jesus Christ as a God who meets us where we are and loves us as we are. We are glad for this day and grateful for your many gifts. You bring good things into our lives, more than we can name, more than we can number. Amen.

*HYMN 425

Lord of Light, Your Name Outshining

*INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Jesus calls us to enter the joy of discipleship, the joy of following in his way. But sin clings closely, and we struggle to respond fully

to Christ's invitation. Let us seek God's forgiveness so that we may know more deeply the joy God intends.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (*Unison*)

God of perfect love, you continually bring forth life, transforming sadness to joy, and despair to hope. We are weak, but you are strong. Our ways are flawed, but your ways are true. We are seldom right, but you are never wrong. Forgive us, redeem us, transform us. Take away the sin that burdens us and restore us to the people you would have us be, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

(Moments of Silent Prayer)

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Relentlessly, God seeks us out. With abundant grace and boundless mercy, God seeks us out. This is good news!

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Amen!

***GLORIA PATRI** (*Unison; Hymn 579*)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD AMONG US

THE PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (*Unison*)

May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of all of our hearts, be acceptable, even pleasing in your sight, O Lord, our strength and redeemer. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING

Psalm 23

¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;

³ he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

This is the Word of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

THE NEW TESTAMENT READING

Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸ For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light – ⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³ but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

This is the Word of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

How Great His Love

The Haviland Choir

Ruth Elaine Schram

Lorenz Publishing Company, CCL#2595933

How great His love, how great His mercy,
to choose the path that leads to Calvary;
To drink the cup of pain and sorrow;
How great His love, how great His love for me.
How great His love;

How great the love of God, the Father,
to choose a plan that sends His only Son
to live with us, to walk among us;
How great His love, how great His love for us.
How great His love, how great His love,
that he should call us His children,
that He should give Jesus;

How great His love for us,
how great His love for us.
How great His love, how generous His compassion,
to meet our need before we knew to ask;
To call our names, to beckon us to follow;
How great His love, how great His love for us.
How great His love, how great His love,
that he should call us His children,
that he should give Jesus.

How great His love, how great His love for us.
How great His love for us.

THE GOSPEL READING

John 9:1-41

¹ As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷ saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." ¹⁰ But they

kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" ¹¹ He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." ¹² They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. ¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

¹⁸ The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹ and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹ but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵ He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." ²⁶ They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷ He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" ²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." ³⁰ The man answered, "Here is

an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will.³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”³⁴ They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.³⁹ Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.”⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?”⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

This is the Gospel of the LORD.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

*“Blinded by the Darkness”
Ruling Elder Sam Ewing*

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD IN OUR LIVES

*HYMN 387

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*Unison; from The Brief Statement of Faith*)

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed, and blessing the children, healing the sick, and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was

crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal. With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

MOMENT FOR CELEBRATION

Lynn Zocolo

CALL TO OFFERING / OFFERTORY

Celtic Heart

Herman Beeftink

Cheryl McDevitt, Flute; Jan Cox, Piano

*RESPONSE HYMN 592 (*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*)

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (*Unison*)

O God, with faith and hope, we offer these gifts. Use them, as you use us, to accomplish your purposes in Jesus Christ, the head of the church and the Lord of our lives. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND SUPPLICATION/LORD'S PRAYER (*sins*)

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

WE ENTER THE WORLD AS GOD'S PEOPLE

*HYMN 324

Open My Eyes That I May See

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE (*Hymn 2162, Sing the Faith, Grace Alone*)

Every promise we can make, every prayer and step of faith,
every difference we will make is only by his grace.

Every mountain we will climb, every ray of hope we shine,
every blessing left behind is only by his grace.

Grace alone which God supplies,
strength unknown he will provide.

Christ in us our Cornerstone;
we will go forth in grace alone.

*Please remain standing as the Light of Christ
is carried into the world.*

POSTLUDE

Sortie in C

Arthur W. Marchant

We Welcome Ruling Sam Ewing to the pulpit this morning.

Head Ushers: Wanda Navoyosky, Sandy Quinn

Liturgist: Lynn Zocolo

Light-Bearer: Joseph Seefeldt

Bulletins have been given anonymously with thanks to Ed, the Tonkinson “boys”, and Property and Maintenance for taking such excellent care of our church building.

Flowers have been given anonymously to celebrate Pi Day (3/14) and to thank God for the intelligence He has given all of us so someone could figure out Pi and its value and so we can learn about mathematics and so many wonderful things.

Last Day to Order Easter Plants

Daffodils, Lilies, and Tulips are \$11.00 each. Tulip color choices are Orange, Purple, and Red.

Soup Lunch Today following Worship

Bring your favorite soup to share and join us in Fellowship Hall. Sponsored by the Congregational Care Committee.

Preschool Easter Egg Hunt – Friday, March 27

Last year many of you filled plastic eggs for their hunt and the children had so much fun. If you would like to fill some plastic eggs this year, please leave them on the table outside of the Preschool door next Sunday, March 22. Thank you so much!

Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service – April 2 at 7:30 p.m.

Easter Services at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. – April 5

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering – Sharing God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world provides relief from natural disasters (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance), food for the hungry (Presbyterian Hunger Program), and support for the poor and oppressed (Self-Development of People). Please give what you can. When we all do a little, it adds up to a lot. *OGHS Envelopes are in the Pew Racks.*

Vision Statement

*To glorify God and share the Spirit and love of Christ
with our community and the world.*

Sunday, March 15

Soup Luncheon following Worship (Fellowship Hall)

2:00 Cub Scout Pack 3 (Basement)

Monday, March 16

6:30 2003 Family Troop (Basement)

Tuesday, March 17

9:30 Holy Yoga (Fellowship Hall)

5:30 Lent Study (Library)

Wednesday, March 18

6:00 Carillon Ringers (200)

7:00 Haviland Choir (S)

Thursday, March 19

9:30 Holy Yoga (Fellowship Hall)

6:00 Regular Session Meeting (Library/Hybrid)

Sunday, March 22

9:00 Sunday School for Pre-K to 12th Grade / Adults (Library)

10:00 Coffee Hour (Fellowship Hall) – *Congregational Care*

10:30 Service of Worship

2:00 Cub Scout Pack 3 (Basement)

Pastor..... Rev. Annie Parker, 330-720-5884

pastorannie@fpcsaalem.org

Clerk of Session..... Barbara Loudon, bloudon@neo.rr.com

Director of Music..... John Krauss, wjohnkrauss@gmail.com

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