



Corbin Presbyterian Church

March 14, 2021
4th Sunday in Lent

In Lent, we're reminded that, again and again, suffering and brokenness find us. We doubt again, we lament again, we mess up again. Again and again, the story of Jesus on the cross repeats—every time lives are taken unjustly, every time the powerful choose corruption and violence, every time individuals forget how to love. With exacerbation we exclaim, "Again?! How long, O God?" And yet, in the midst of the motion blur chaos of our lives, God offers a sacred refrain: "I choose you, I love you, I will lead you to repair." Again and again, God breaks the cycle and offers us a new way forward.

This theme provides a clear invitation in a time when much is unclear. Even if worshiping apart, we come to God again and again with our prayers, our dreams, our hopes, and our doubts. Even if from a distance, we will continue to be community to one another—especially when it's hard—by choosing each other over and over again. We will continue to love God with the same persistence God chooses and claims us through Jesus Christ. The sub-theme, "A Lenten Refrain," speaks to the ways God can make music of our lives. "Refrain" also reminds us that Lent is a season of abstaining from certain practices in order to take on new rhythms and habits.

In this season, we need rituals—both old and new—to remember and be transformed. Embodied practice builds muscle memory. We need the days of Lent because this season shapes us into more faithful disciples. This Lent, again and again, we bring all of who we are to God and trust that God will meet us, time and again along the way until "an Easter of unending joy we may attain at last!" (hymn: Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days)

Gathering Around the Word

Prelude

The Old Rugged Cross

arr. Benton Price

Preparing for Worship

This week's theme is *Again & Again, God Loves First*. After inviting Nicodemus to be born anew, Jesus tells him in John 3 that God so love the world that God sent his son to restore it. Therefore, when we read John 3:16, we remember that Jesus is speaking in metaphor and poetry. Ultimately, love is where God begins and ends. This love, like grace, is a gift we do nothing to deserve. Again and again, love is our refrain. Before we act, think, or believe, can love be first for us too? As we prepare to worship, let us pray:

*Again and again—we are invited in.
Again and again—God meets us.
We are here. God is here.
This space is holy ground.*

Call to Worship

Before we were born, before we took our first breath,
Before the week started, before the year started,
Before we said, “I love you,” before we said, “I’m sorry,”
Before we figured out who we really are,
Before we figured out who we want to be,
Before it all—
God loved us.
Unconditionally and freely,
Fully and honestly—
God loved us.
Again and again, this is where our story begins.
Let us worship God!

Prayer of the Day

Hymn #634

To God Be the Glory

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

*To God be the glory; great things he has done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
Who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.*

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord; let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord; let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,
And give him the glory: great things he has done!*

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

**God of love, we forget the beginning of the story—
That we were made from love, to be love, to give love.
Instead of rooting our narrative in the goodness of creation,
We skip ahead and find our worth at the fall,
With Cain and Abel, lost in the wilderness.
We forget that first there was you, and you are love.
We forget that out of that love you created us.
We forget that from the very first day, you loved us first.
We forget, because a love like that does not make sense to us.
Forgive us.
Forgive our resistance to love ourselves.
Forgive our hesitation to trust that even we could be made good.
And forgive our tendency to pass that doubt on—from generation to generation.
Write a new beginning for us that roots our confidence in your relenting love,
Made known to us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
With hope we pray, again and again. Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness Ephesians 2:4-10

⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— ⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Hear the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Hearing the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture John 3:1-21

³ Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” ³ Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹ “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ “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.

¹⁷ “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. ¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

Sermon

Again & Again, God Loves Us First

The Rev. Lisa R. Eye

Responding to the Word

Hymn #215

What Wondrous Love Is This

WONDROUS LOVE

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul, what wondrous love is this, O my soul!

*What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul!*

*When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down, when I was sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down beneath God righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul!*

*Tod God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing, to God and to the Lamb, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I AM,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;
While millions join the theme, I will sing!*

*And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on; and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on;
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,
And through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
And through eternity I'll sing on.*

Affirmation of Faith

The Apostles' Creed (traditional)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People & The Lord's Prayer

...we offer these and all our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught to pray saying, *Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.*

Offering & Dedication

Offering plates will not be passed in the sanctuary this morning, There are offering envelopes and a plate on the table just outside the sanctuary doors where you may place your offering before you leave. All worshippers, here or at home, may send offerings to Corbin Presbyterian Church, 601 Master St., Corbin, KY. 40701.

Following the Word into the World

Hymn

God, You Love the World

ARGENTINA

*God, you love the world! You sent your only Son,
And you said, "Go share my love with everyone."
So we seek to serve you in our homes and towns,
And we work to show the world: Your love abounds!
Lead us, as we go this day;
Guide us as we work and pray.
Give us, when each day is through,
True joy, found in serving you.*

Text by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. Used by permission

Charge & Benediction

Postlude

Rigaudon

Andre' Campra
1660-1744



Corbin Presbyterian Church

601 Master Street, Corbin, KY 40701

Phone: 606-528-1444 Website: www.corbinpres.org Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CorbinPresby/>

Zoom link for worship: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83307369561?pwd=NUJocHN1NmNMZEtiOUdGRW0ycEwzdz09>

The Reverend Lisa R. Eye, Pastor
Clay Howard, Director of Music/Organist

Session

Class of 2021
Tom Fish
Bob Martin

Class of 2022
Janet Martin
Doralene Webb

Class of 2023
David Hoskins
Harold Davis

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday & Thursday, 9am – 1pm

Rev. Eye may be reached during office hours by calling the Church Office or by email: pastor@corbinpres.org; for pastoral emergencies at 859-329-9026