

## Worship Notes

*Acts 7:55-60; Psalm 31: 1-5, 15-16; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14*

Since the beginning, Israel's faith has turned to God in situations of acute trouble. In such turning, Israel has found God utterly reliable, and able to rescue. Today's psalm reading sounds those ancient cadences of reliability. On the one hand, the psalm acknowledges deep trouble and danger. On the other hand, God is able, powerful and willing to rescue and to lead Israel to a safe place, a rock, a fortress, a refuge.

The sermon in Acts 7 takes up those ancient cadences of confidence, and places them on the lips and in the mouth of Stephen. Stephen talks the way Israel has characteristically talked. In his Easter proclamation, it is evident that the early church celebrates realities and trust in affirmations that the world could neither understand, nor tolerate. The preaching of Stephen evokes powerful hostility in his listeners. In the end, however, it is Stephen (and not his opponents) who knows the joy and well-being of life as a gift from God. His trusting innocence is sharply contrasted with the hate-poisoned lives that are spent in the service of death. The one whom the world sees as killed is the one who in the end knows God's rescue.

Both the Gospel and Epistle readings turn the faith of the Psalm and the drama of Stephen's ending toward the need of a domesticated church to reengage its identity and its odd mode of being. The Gospel concerns a safe, guaranteed "place," a place of safety and well-being in which it can practice its peculiar life, unafraid and unintimidated. The Epistle reading concerns a household, an intentionally alternative household. Because of its peculiar faith and its identity formed in hurt, the church is a unified community capable of risking hospitality. In speaking of a place with the Father (in the Gospel) and in a "house" (in the Epistle), these readings return to the language of the Psalms, which seek from God a safe place. This is a community emboldened by the God of refuge, rock and fortress, not fearful of its enemies, not seduced by other places. Stephen turns out to be a buoyant believer, who in his crisis is the only one who is not "displaced." The language of "place" serves the practice of risky, confident obedience.

*Texts for Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary Based on the NRSV—Year A*

## Mission Statement

First Presbyterian Church of Portland, Oregon, is called to obedience to Christ to whom the Scriptures bear witness and to the fulfillment of the Great Commission:

*Go...and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*  
*Matthew 28:19-20*

We believe our call to serve as the Body of Christ is mandated by Christ alone and is supported by Him in every way through the dedicated discipleship of this community of Faith.

We minister to the community at our doorstep, the nation and the world.

Through worship, education, fellowship, mission outreach and the promotion of social justice, we witness to the power of God's redemptive grace.

First Presbyterian Church will continue to be a body through which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, experienced, practiced and made first in our lives.

## Prayers of the People

### PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING

*For all those who gave so generously to offer the Portland community the gift of our green, sustainable plaza. March 27 marked the 2nd anniversary of its opening on Easter Sunday 2006.*

### PRAYER FOR MISSION

*This week, our denomination marks Earth Day. When members of a Kansas congregation attended church one Sunday last April, they got a worship service, fellowship—and energy saving fluorescent light bulbs. The church, Village Presbyterian in Prairie Village, gave away 1,500 bulbs as part of its commitment to environmental stewardship. The church adopted a Sustainable Sanctuary plan to reduce its environmental impact in 2002 and to practice faithful stewardship of God's creation. The congregation operates two paper-recycling centers which on average, process more than five tons a paper each month. In addition, the church has replaced Styrofoam dinnerware with reusable dinnerware saving an estimated ten 55-gallon bags per week from ending up in the landfill. Jerry Rees, a member of Village Presbyterian, says, "Faith communities are key in addressing the moral imperative of the environmental crisis, leading by example, by education, and by inspiration." Today let us pray for all those who are striving to be good stewards of God's creation.*

*2008 Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study*

### PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord God, thank you for the gift of our earth and show us how to be better stewards of this great gift. Give us empathy towards your creatures and appreciation for their interconnectedness. Help us to live faithfully and be good ambassadors of Christ in this holy work. Amen.

## Church Pastoral and Program Staff

Dr. J. Thomas Green, Interim Pastor  
Rev. Anne Stewart Miller, Associate Pastor/Christian Education  
Dr. Thomas C. Nolen, Associate Pastor/Congregational Nurture  
Dr. J. Spencer Parks, Associate Pastor/Retreat Ministries/Menucha Director  
Dr. Jon Stuber, Director of Music Ministries  
Sally Bowder, Church Business Administrator  
Jason Mitchell, Director of Youth Ministries  
Ann van Bever, Instrumental Music Program Assistant  
Daniel Burnett, Youth Choir Director  
Kristen Buhler, Children's Choir Director  
Ben Kinkley, Cherub Choir Director  
Patty Warman, Julia West Program Director  
Tom Wilson, Daywatch Coordinator  
Rev. William Creevey, Pastor Emeritus  
Mr. James Welty, Director of Music Emeritus



## Service for the Lord's Day

1200 SW Alder Street • Portland, Oregon 97205 • 503-228-7331  
Broadcast live on 1330 AM KKPZ radio and over the Internet at [www.fpcpdx.org](http://www.fpcpdx.org)

April 20, 2008      5th Sunday of Easter      10:00 a.m.

### THE GATHERING

**PRELUDE**      "Antiphonal Celebration"      Kevin McChesney  
*(Handbell Choir)*

**INTROIT**      "Introit for Easter"      Iain Quinn  
The Lord is risen indeed;  
Come let us adore him; Alleluia.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
As it was in the beginning is now and will be forever.  
Amen.  
*(Chancel Choir)*

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**  
Let us worship God.  
I am the way, and the truth, and the life, says the Lord.  
**No one comes to the Father except through me.**

### \*PRAYER FOR THE DAY

♦  
\***HYMN No. 483**      MIT FREUDEN ZART  
"Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above"

### \*INVITATION TO CONFESSION

### \*PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Unison)*

God of glory, you sent Jesus among us as the light of the world to reveal your love for all people. We confess that our sin and pride keep us from living in the clarity of your glory. We turn from the poor; we ignore cries for justice; we do not strive for peace. In your mercy, cleanse us of our sin, and baptize us once again with your Spirit, that forgiven and renewed, we may show forth your wisdom by living within your Word and walking in your way.

*A moment is kept for individual reflection.*

Large print bulletins and assisted hearing devices are available. Ask an usher.

**\*KYRIE**

Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.  
 Christ, have mer - cy up - on us.  
 Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

**\*DECLARATION OF PARDON**

Sisters and brothers, hear the good news! The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, that we might be dead to sin, and alive to all that is good. I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Amen.

**\*RESPONSE OF THANKSGIVING**

HAMBURG

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

**\*THE PEACE**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, we also ought to forgive one another. The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

*You are invited to greet those around you with words and signs of God's reconciling peace.*

**WELCOME AND CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH**

*Please sign and pass the Friendship Folder and return the folder back down the pew so that you may know those sitting with you.*

**MINUTE FOR MISSION**

Seafarers

**GOOD NEWS MOMENT**

Congregational Nominating Committee

**THE WORD**

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**FIRST LESSON**

Acts 7:55-60

Pew Bible, page 126

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**CHILDREN'S MOMENT**

*Kindergarten through 5th grade children are now dismissed to their classes beginning in the Whitman Room, then their classroom. Please consult the bulletin board at the 13th Avenue entrance for your child's classroom location after worship. Preschoolers, accompanied by a parent, may go directly to their classroom.*

**EPISTLE LESSON**

1 Peter 2:2-10

Pew Bible, page 233

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**ANTHEM**

“How Firm a Foundation”

Sondra K. Tucker

*(Handbell Choir)*

**GOSPEL LESSON**

John 14:1-14

Pew Bible, page 108

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

**SERMON**

“Enough Room for Everyone”

Dr. Green

**\*HYMN NO. 357**

“O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee”

MARYTON

**\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** *(Unison)*

Philippians 2:5-11

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess to the glory of God: Jesus Christ is Lord! Amen.

**OFFERING**

“The Call”

Z. Randall Stroope

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life;  
Such a Way as gives us breath:  
Such a Truth as ends all strife:  
Such a Life as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:  
Such a Light as shows a feast:  
Such a Feast as mends in length:  
Such a Strength as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:  
Such a Joy as none can move:  
Such a Love as none can part:  
Such a Heart as joys in love.

*(Chancel Choir)*

**\*DOXOLOGY**

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, you heavenly host,  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost! Amen.

**\*PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*Prayer is offered.*

**\*THE LORD'S PRAYER** *(Unison)*

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**

**\*HYMN NO. 343**

“Called as Partners in Christ's Service”

BEECHER

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*POSTLUDE**

Spiritual/arr. Roy L. Belfield, Jr.

“I Know I Been Changed”

I know I been changed, the angels in heaven done changed my name.  
I'm sometimes up, sometimes down, but still my soul feels heavenly bound.  
If you don't believe I been redeemed, just follow me down to Jordan stream.  
I prayed all night and all day too, and kept on praying till I come thru.  
If you get there before I do, tell all my friends I'm coming, too.  
I know I been changed, the angels in heaven done changed my name.

*(Chancel Choir; Georgina Philippson, soloist)*

\*Please stand if you are able.

♦ Ushers may seat latecomers.

**WORSHIP LEADERS**

J. Thomas Green: Call to Worship, Prayer for the Day, Welcome, Prayer for Illumination, First Lesson, Gospel Lesson, Sermon, Benediction

Anne Stewart Miller is on vacation today.

Thomas C. Nolen: Confession, Pardon, Peace, Children's Moment, Affirmation of Faith, Offering, Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession, Lord's Prayer

J. Spencer Parks is at Menucha today.

Jon Stuber: Organist/Choirmaster, Handbell Choir Conductor

Jon Deming: Acolyte

Ken Williams: Minute for Mission

Peter van Bever: Good News Moment

Dick McFall: Epistle Lesson

*The arrangement of flowers in the sanctuary this morning is given in loving memory of Anthony and Jerry Furio by their daughter Shirley Keltner and grandson Grant.*