

Durham Mennonite Church

March 5, 2023



Welcome to Durham Mennonite Church

Welcome and Announcements

Crop Walk – Sunday, April 2

Opening Prayer

God of the ages,

we come into this holy space

asking for your blessing,

only to find that the abundance of your love
is already around us.

Open our eyes to see the blessing of your
creation

in the beauty all around us.

Open our ears to hear the blessing of your word
as it is proclaimed in story and song this day.

Open our hearts to experience
the blessing of faith

through the gentle touch of a friend
or the supportive smile of a stranger.
And open our doors,
that we may become vessels of your blessing
to a world still in need of salvation.
All this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Call to Worship (Genesis 12, Psalm 121, John 3)

Come, all who need help!

Our help comes from God,

the one who made heaven and earth.

Come, all who desire blessing!

Our blessing comes from God,

the God of Abraham, the God of the ages.

Come, all who long for salvation!

**Our salvation comes from Jesus Christ,
the one sent by God to save the world.**

Hymn - HWB #162

“The God of Abraham Praise”

The God of Abraham praise
All praised be the Name
who was, and is, and is to be
is still the same;
the one eternal God
ere all that now appears,
the First, the Last, beyond all thought

through timeless years.
God's Spirit flowing free,
high surging where it will
in prophet's word it spoke of old
is speaking still.

Established is God's law
and changeless it shall stand.
deep writ upon the human heart
on sea, or land

God has eternal life
implanted on the soul.
God's love shall be our strength and stay
while ages roll.

Praise to the living God!
All praised be the Name,
who is, and was, and is to be,
is still the same!

Hymn - VT #203

“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”

O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home:

Under the shadow of your throne
your saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is your arm alone,
and our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
or earth received its frame,
from everlasting you are God,
to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in your sight
are like an evening gone,
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
soon bears us all away;
we fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the op'ning day.

O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
still be our guard while troubles last,
and our eternal home!

Confession of Sin (Genesis 12, John 3)

God of salvation,

you shower our lives and our world with love,

yet we too often turn away from your blessing.

It is just so easy to complain!

There are little annoyances each day,

but they pile up into a mountainous burden

that becomes a curse on our lives.

Free us from our unwise choices, O God.

When we are distracted and confused,

redirect our attention

to the abundant opportunities

to experience your love.

During this Lenten journey,

focus our hearts on you,

that we may choose the blessing of salvation

offered us each day through Jesus Christ,

in whom we pray. **Amen.**

Assurance of Grace (Genesis 12, John 3)

God did not send Jesus into the world

to condemn it,

but that the world might be saved through him.

Through the saving love of Jesus Christ,
you are forgiven and blessed!

Hymn - VT #575, "Faith of the Martyrs"

Faith of the martyrs, living still
in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;
oh, how our hearts beat high with joy
whene'er we hear that glorious word!

**Faith of the martyrs, holy faith,
we will be true to thee till death.**

The martyrs chained in prison cells
were still in heart and conscience free,
and bless'd would be their children's fate
if they, like them, should die for thee!

**Faith of the martyrs, holy faith,
we will be true to thee till death.**

Faith of the martyrs, we will love
both friend and foe in all our strife,
and preach thee, too, as love knows how,
by saving word and faithful life!

**Faith of the martyrs, holy faith,
we will be true to thee till death.**

Scripture - Genesis 12:1-7

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make

your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

Scripture - Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills.

From where does my help come?

My help comes from the Lord,

who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved;

he who guards you will not slumber.

Behold, he who guards Israel

will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your protector;

the Lord is your shade on your right
hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.

The Lord will guard you from all evil;
he will guard your life.

The Lord will guard your going out and
your coming in

from this time forth and forevermore.

Scripture – John 8:31-40

Then Jesus said to the Judeans who had believed in him, ‘If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’ They answered him, ‘We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, “You will become free”?’

Jesus answered them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the household forever; the son remains there forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no

place in you. I declare what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you should do what you have heard from the Father.'

They answered him, 'Abraham is our father.' Jesus said to them, 'If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did, but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did.'

Scripture - Romans 4:1-24

What then are we to say was found by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by

works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' Now to one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is credited as righteousness. So also David speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;

blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not credit sin.'

Is this blessedness, then, only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We say, 'Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness.' How then was it credited to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised, so he might become the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them too, and also the father of the circumcised who are not only circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father

Abraham had when he was still uncircumcised.

For the promise to Abraham and to his seed that he would inherit the world was not through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if the adherents of the law are to be the heirs, faith is void and the promise is nullified. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, there is no transgression either.

For this reason it is by faith, in order that the promise might be in accordance with grace and be guaranteed to all his seed, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share in the faith of Abraham who is the father of us all (as it is written, 'I have made you the father of

many nations'), in the presence of the God whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Against all hope, in hope he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations', according to what was spoken, 'So numerous shall your seed be.' Without weakening in faith, he considered his own body already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver in unbelief concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in faith, giving glory to God and being fully convinced that what God had promised he also was able to do. Therefore 'it was credited to him as righteousness.' But

the words, 'it was credited to him', were written not for his sake alone, but for our sake also. It will be credited to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Sermon – Spencer Bradford

Congregational Response

Prayers of God's People

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name;

your kingdom come,

your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Communion Prayer of Thanksgiving

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. We come in grateful celebration of Jesus' cross and resurrection, giving from our receiving, inviting as we have been invited, serving as we are served, renewing our bond to the narrow way of Jesus. There is room at his table for all who follow Jesus in God's covenant of grace and obedience.

The Lord is God, compassionate and gracious, overflowing in loving mercy and steadfast kindness. Blessed be God, now and forever!

As the grain once scattered in the fields and the grapes once dispersed on the hills are now united on this table in bread and drink, so Lord, may we be made a true community of your Spirit as your Body on earth, and may your whole people soon be gathered together from across the earth in your Kingdom of holy peace.

Come, Lord Jesus! To you be glory forever!

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise
to the Lord, because he is good;
his love is eternal.**

Truly, it is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to offer our praise, worship, and thanksgiving to you, Almighty and Ever-living God. For your generous creating grace, for redemption from slavery and sin when we have resisted and left you, and for calling your people into obedient love through your law, prophets, and apostles,

Blessed are you, O God, holy and mighty.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who emptied himself of divine power and status, taking the form of a servant

and being born as one among us. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. He took upon himself the weight of our sin and carried the burden of our violence. He shared our life in every way, and though tempted, was sinless and loved us to the end. We thank you for the baptism of his willing suffering, death, and resurrection that redeems us from slavery to sin and death, and adopts us with new birth into God's covenant family by water and the Spirit.

**Blessed are you, Creator Spirit,
who makes all things new!**

Come, Spirit of Christ, and fulfill the promise of your kingdom among us. For on the night that he was betrayed, during supper, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it, he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat. This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Then he took a

cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying: "Drink from this, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." So with praise and thanksgiving, we offer to you all these gifts and our very selves, received from your grace, to be a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's self-giving for us and for the whole world:

**We praise you, we bless you, we worship
and thank you, O Lord our God.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon this communion, on us gathered here and on these gifts, that the sharing of this bread and cup may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Sanctify and fill us with your true presence, that in all our lives we may be for the world the Body of Christ, redeemed by his blood, shining with the light of his love and grace toward all. As we share your presence

anew at this table of your giving, let us share your presence with the world in the giving of our lives and selves, in your service for all people, doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly in your ways. By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one in fellowship with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until we feast together at your heavenly table with all your saints, fully reconciled in grace and peace. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

AMEN.

Sharing of Bread and Cup at the Lord's Table

Hymn - HWB #477, "For the Bread"

1 For the bread which you have broken,
for the wine which you have poured,
for the words which you have spoken,
now we give you thanks, O Lord.

2 By this promise that you love us,
by your gift of peace restored,
by your call to heaven above us,
hallow all our lives, O Lord.

3 In your service, Lord, defend us;
in our hearts keep watch and ward;
in the world to which you send us
let your kingdom come, O Lord.

Sending (Psalm 121, John 3)

As you leave this place,

lift up your eyes to the Lord!

The One who sent Jesus Christ,

as salvation for all the world,

will never desert you.

The Lord will keep your going out

and your coming in,

from this time on, and forevermore.

Go now in peace, with God's blessing.