



Worship @ Home Guide

March 14, 2021- 4th Sunday in Lent

Woodstock Presbyterian Church
142 E. Court St., Woodstock, VA 22664
www.woodstockpresbyterianchurch.com

RECONNECT

Gathering Music/Announcements — Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us_

Welcome

Call to Worship

One: Before we were born,

All: Before we took our first breath,

One: Before the week started,

All: Before the year started,

One: Before we said, “I love you,”

All: Before we said, “I’m sorry,”

One: Before we figured out who we really are,

All: Before we figured out who we want to be,

One: Before it all—

All: God loved us.

One: Unconditionally and freely,

All: Fully and honestly—

One: God loved us.

All: Again and again, this is where our story begins.

One: Let us worship God!

Hymn —O Sacred Head Now Wounded (Center for Cong Song recording)

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 refrain 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 first.
We forget, because a love like that doesn't make sense to us.
Forgive our low self-esteem.
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 unrelenting love.
With hope we pray, again and again. Amen.

Prayers of the People – “Again & Again”

READ

prayer for illumination

God of the here and now—
We have heard the words,
“For God so loved the world
That he gave his only son,”
Time and time again.
We have read them on billboards,
Heard them in worship,
And seen them on signs.
And yet we know,
There is a difference between
Hearing those words
In passing
And truly, deeply listening.
We long to listen, God.
We long to hear your truth.
We long to know your love.
Open our hearts and minds.
We are listening.
Amen.

Scripture Reading – John 3:14-21

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.^[a]

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.”^[b]

Scripture Reading – Ephesians 2:1-10

2 You were dead through the trespasses and sins ² in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³ All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵ even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ^[a]—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— ⁹ not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

REFLECT

Message **“Again & Again, God Loves First”**

RESPOND

Installation of Elders – Irene Mertens, Barbara Simons

PRESENTATION

In baptism, Barbara & Irene were clothed with Christ, and are now called by God through the voice of the church to enter into ministries of service and governance, announcing in word and deed the good news of Jesus Christ.

We remember with joy our common calling to serve Christ, and we celebrate God’s particular call to our brothers and sisters.

SENTENCES OF SCRIPTURE

One: There are varieties of gifts, but it is the same Spirit who gives them.

All: **There are different ways of serving God, but it is the same Lord who is served.**

One: God works through each person in a unique way, but it is God's purpose that is accomplished.

All: **To each is given a gift of the Spirit to be used for the common good.**

One: Together we are the body of Christ, and individually members of it.

STATEMENT ON ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION

We are all called into the church of Jesus Christ by baptism, and marked as Christ's own by the Holy Spirit. This is our common calling, to be disciples and servants of our servant Lord. Within the community of the church, some are called to particular service as deacons, as elders, and as ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Ordination is Christ's gift to the church, assuring that his ministry continues among us, providing for ministries of caring and compassion in the world, ordering the governance of the church, and preaching the Word and administering the sacraments.

Representing the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, the session of Woodstock Presbyterian Church now installs Irene Mertens and Barbara Simons to active service on the Session.

REAFFIRMATION OF THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

Ordination calls the whole church to renewed commitment, and reminds us all to bear gladly the yoke of Christ given in the covenant of baptism. Let us, therefore, reaffirm our baptismal vows, renouncing all that opposes God and God's rule and affirming the faith of the holy catholic church.

RENUNCIATIONS

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world? **I DO.**

Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Lord and Savior, trusting in his grace and love? **I DO.**

Will you be Christ's faithful; disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?
I WILL, WITH GOD'S HELP.

PROFESSION - With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

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

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Do you?

Do you accept the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the church universal, and god's word to you? Do you?

Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God? Do you and will you?

Will you fulfill your office in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions? Will you?

Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit? Will you?

Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world? Will you?

Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church? Do you?

Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination and love? Will you?

Will you be a faithful elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in governing bodies of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ? Will you?

to church: Do you, the members of the church, accept Barbara and Irene as elders, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ?

Do you agree to encourage them, to respect their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ who alone is Head of the Church?

PRAYER FOR ELDERS

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon your servants whom you called through baptism as your own and marked as your own. Grant them the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. Give them a spirit of truthfulness that they may show the compassion of Christ in the actions of daily living and rightly govern your people. Give them the gifts of your Holy Spirit to build up the church, to strengthen the common life of your people, and to lead with compassion and vision. In the walk of faith and for the work of ministry, give to your servants gladness and strength, discipline and hope, humility, humor, and courage, and an abiding sense of your presence.

DECLARATION OF INSTALLATION

CHARGE 2 Tim. 2:15

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.

RETURN

Words of Forgiveness

One: Friends, whether you are standing at the door of a deeper faith journey,
Unsure of what comes next,
Or running your way through that threshold,
You are claimed, forgiven, and loved by God.

**All: Again and again, we are forgiven.
Again and again, we are loved.
Again and again, we are invited in.**

One: Thanks be to God for a love like that.
if you hear nothing else today, hear this:
God is here. God sees you. God knows you. God meets you at the edge of every new beginning,
And God calls you beloved.

All: We are washed by the water.

**We are called beloved.
Thanks be to God for a love like that.**

One: Siblings in Christ,
We confess with gratitude because we know that God already has heard and forgiven us.
No matter what we have done or left undone, we are held in God's hand.
So rest in this good news:

**All: God invites us in.
God meets us where we are.
God hears our prayers.
God forgives us.**

One: Family of faith, no matter what we do, where we go, or what we tell ourselves—
God is love, and God is loving us.

**All: Again and again, we are claimed, held, forgiven, and cared for.
In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself—thanks be to God.
Amen!**

Charge & Benediction - again & again, a lenten refrain

As you leave this space,
May your mouth speak of God's goodness.
May your arms hold those in need.
May your feet walk toward justice.
May your heart trust its worth.
May your soul dance in God's grace.
And may this be your rhythm—
Again and again and again,
Until God's promised day.
In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself,
Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.
Amen.

Sending Hymn I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

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*"Kid President's Letter to a Person On Their First Day Here," published on YouTube, January 23, 2014.
[youtube.com/watch?v=I5-EwrhsMzY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5-EwrhsMzY)*