

Use the following worship guide as we gather on Sunday morning via Zoom. Simply click here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2398495210>

** Announcements are at the end of this order of worship. **

The Service of Worship

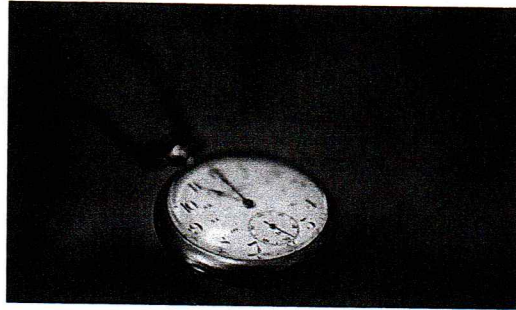
First and St. Stephen's United Church of Christ

Baltimore, Maryland

Third Sunday after the Epiphany – Year A

January 22, 2023

10:30 a.m.



*If you are visiting online, please place your email address in the chat.
We will gladly send you the weekly Order of Worship and Announcements.*

Prelude *Evening and Morning, Sunset and Dawning* Nancy Chronister, Director of Music
By Lani Smith

Welcome

Rev. Kelly M. Sisson, Pastor

Call to Worship Litany (Congregation reads **bold**)

Come out of the shadows and into God's light!

We will not play hide and seek, but will make a pilgrimage to God's heart.

Lay down all which is a burden to you!

We will give our fears to God, who is our help in every moment.

Follow the One who will lead you to new life!

We long to live in God's presence every day of our lives.

Hymn for Worship NCH #436 *God of Grace and God of Glory* CWM RHONDDA
(as able, please stand)

Call to Reconciliation

If we come to God with open hearts and honest words, we will not be pushed away, but wrapped in God's loving and forgiving embrace. I invite you to join me as we confess our lives to God, praying,

Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

We admit, God our Light, that we do indeed try to tear Christ apart - a piece of him here to support our politics, a part of him to undergird our economic views, the rest of him to bolster our fears of others. We could leave immediately to follow him, but need to wait until we see where he might lead us. We want you to look upon us with favor always, but have no trouble turning our backs on those around us.

Hear us, God our Deliverer, as we speak of our failures! Have mercy on us, we appeal to you, have mercy! May your love become the core of our hearts, may your compassion become the words we speak, may your hope illuminate the ways in which we serve others, even as we seek to follow the One who calls us to new life, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Silence is kept

Please remember these shared concerns:

- Our siblings in the Ukraine, and prayers for peace
- Our church as we make decisions about our future
- Family and Friends of Dakota Hoffman.

- Emily's friend, Sharon. Living with cancer.
- John's friend. Living with cancer.
- Karen Lovelace
- Martha Wharton's father and step-mother
- Jen Langdon's nephew, Bryce
- Teresa Summers' friend with breast cancer
- Tiffany Summers, Teresa's daughter – expecting a baby
- Stef's brother, David, living with Alzheimer's

Assurance of Pardon

God is our help, so why should we be afraid? God keeps us safe, there is nothing to dread! This is good news for all of us.

Sheltered in God's gracious heart of mercy and love, we raise shouts of joy: thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.

The Scripture Lesson

Matthew 4:12-23

Anthem

God Be In My Head

Choir

By Daniel E. Schwandt

The Homily

Courage to Change

The Rev. Kelly M. Sisson

Congregational Response

Spirit of Life (see insert)

The Eleventh Hour Congregational Meeting

Making our Offerings

Please consider making an offering through on-line giving, or mail your check to the church address. You can find information on our church web page: first-ststephens.org You may also place your offering in the offering plate in the back of the sanctuary.

Prayer of Dedication

~congregation reads bold print~

Use our gifts, Loving God, so others might not be scared by life; so they may be sheltered in the blanket of your grace; so they might find a home with us as their family. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Hymn for Sending

NCH #376

God, We Thank You for Our People

HOLY MANNA

(as able, please stand)

Sending

Let us take God's light into the world.

We will go to join others in pilgrimage of trust.

Let us go to gather the burdens of others.

We will take away their fears and offer them to Jesus, who helps everyone in every moment.

Let us go to live in the Spirit's presence.

We will follow the Spirit into the peace which is offered to all of God's people.

Postlude

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Worship Resources for today are adapted from:

Thom Shuman, PCUSA

Combined service today – 10:30 – 1p.m. Today, we will be having our Annual Congregational Meeting of the church as part of the worship service. This meeting will be significant as we consider the direction of First and St. Stephen's United Church of Christ beyond 2023. All persons who are active in the church are encouraged to be present. Everyone has voice, and members have vote.