

Order of Worship for Sunday, February 28, 2020

2nd Sunday of Lent – The Power of Sacrifice: What Matters Most

*Not available on prerecorded services

Listen at 814-422-6238. Watch online at www.PennsValleyParish.info

March 2 – Sprucetown UMC Ad Board Meeting 7pm

March 3 – St. James UMC Trustees 6:30pm and Ad Board 7pm

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Today we step up a little higher on our Lenten Journey

P: We are moving from contemplation to action.

L: Are you ready to take the next step?

P: Yes, we are ready. The cross is before us.

L: Come, walk together on this journey to the Cross.

P: Lord, prepare our hearts and our spirits for this next step.

OPENING PRAYER

Guiding Lord, even though we hesitated on our Lenten journey; we vowed to come with you through all the trials and fears toward the Cross. Today we face the challenge which true commitment brings. Are we willing to offer our whole selves to you in service? We would like to think that we can do that, but we are aware of how many times we have turned away from service and instead focused on our own desires. Remind us again of the commitment you would have us give if we are to become disciples. Forgive our stubbornness and fears. Lead us forward, gracious Lord, up these steps toward the Cross. AMEN.

*HYMN Where He Leads Me UMH 338 v. 1 & 2 only

BLESSING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS – DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Deny Your Selfie

JOYS AND CONCERNS - (The Lord's Prayer "trespass")

SELECTED SCRIPTURE Romans 4:13-25, Mark 8:31-38

MESSAGE What Matters Most

*HYMN Where He Leads Me UMH 338 v. 3 & 4 only

COMMISSION & BLESSING

PASTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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BIBLE STUDY: Walk Before Me

Read Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16.

- How comfortable are you with the label *Christian? Baptized believer? Disciple?* Which do you identify with the most? Why?
- What has Abram/Abraham had to sacrifice to be a faithful follower of God? [*His home (Genesis 11), his security, and now his name.*] Why is sacrifice a vital component of discipleship? [*While God meets us where we are, God does not leave us there. To walk in the abundance and newness of life, we must leave our former ways and trust God's ways.*]
- Reread verse 1. Notice that, first, God reminds Abram of God's nature. Second, God gives the condition of the covenant, "Walk before me, and be blameless." What might it look like to walk before God and be blameless? [*Note that Noah was also referred to as blameless in Genesis 6:9. Note also that God has given Abram few specifics. Instead of a specific location, Abram is told to go to the place God will show him. Instead of telling Abram exactly how, God tells the childless and old Abram that his descendants will be exceedingly numerous.*]
- How can our Lenten practices of giving up ("rending our hearts") be small ways that we learn to trust God more?
- In this passage, God also includes Abram's wife Sarai/Sarah as an important part of the story. Her name, and hence her destiny, is radically altered by God. The story of Abram/Abraham and Sarai/Sarah takes place across decades. Like them, we too can feel that God is working at a glacially slow speed. What does their example teach us about dependence on God? About a life of faithfulness?

CLOSING PRAYER

Covenant-keeping God, we continue to believe that you are at work in the world. Help us to rend our hearts and give us the eyes to see hope when we are tempted to despair. Give us reassurance of your presence, even during times when we feel we are stumbling in the dark. May our lives be a witness to those around us of your faithfulness. Amen.