

First Parish Congregational Church
P.O. Box 114, East Derry, New Hampshire 03041/ 47 East Derry Road
Tel. (603) 434 – 0628

March 31, 2019

Fourth Sunday of Lent

The Prodigal Son



ALL ARE WELCOME

*“Friend, you enter this church not as a stranger, but as a guest of God.
Come, then, with joy in your heart and thanks upon your lips,
and offer God today your love and your service.”*

(Adapted from a 12th Century Church in Hampshire, England)

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

PROCESSIONAL WITH LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST LIGHT

*HYMN: #8 Praise to the Living God (Vs 1, 4)

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS; SHARING JOYS & CONCERNS

INTROIT Handchime Choir: How Great Thou Art

*HYMN: #43 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: A new day has dawned; it is God's gift to us;

Many: We are a new creation in Jesus Christ;

One: This is a day for forgiveness and reconciliation;

Many: The glad cries of deliverance and shouts of joy surround us;

One: Let all who are faithful offer up prayers and give thanks;

Many: Let us be glad and join the dance of life.

*INVOCATION (unison)

Welcoming God, we have gathered together so that you may teach us the way we should go. In our times of distress and need, you have provided.

When we have stubbornly followed our own plans, you have curbed our impulses. Meet us now as we worship together to shape us into a righteous, reconciling people. Amen.

*SONG OF PRAISE: # 759 Gloria Patri

CALL TO CONFESSION

We pause to consider how far we may have wandered from our home with God. Have we turned away from responsibility in order to seek shallow pleasures and selfish gratification? Or do we consider ourselves above reproach, looking down on those mired in the pigpens of life? Wherever we are, whoever we are, there is much to confess.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

O God, we will not try to hide from you the wrong we have done or the good we have neglected. You know our transgressions. You have observed our pretensions. We have claimed too lightly the label "Christian," for often we cut ourselves off from you and from people we disagree with. At times our rebellion leaves us hungry, alone, and friendless. Grant us, we pray, your forgiveness and pardon and a renewed sense of who you intend us to be and to become. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

We are assured that God forgives our sin. Happy are those who recognize God's faithfulness and overarching loving kindness. Rejoice, for God has brought us back to life!

ANTHEM: Old Rugged Cross

Music by Gabriel Faure, Words by Charles Wesley, Arranged by Lloyd Larson
(Please join us in singing the first verse at the end of the choir anthem — #195 in the hymnal. You may remain seated.)

WE INVITE FORWARD GOD'S YOUNGER DISCIPLES

At this time, all children are invited to come forward for the children's offering, and children's time. An offering is not required for participation. All are welcome, especially first time visitors.

CHILDREN'S OFFERING and PRAYER OF DEDICATION

In our hearts these gifts we bring; for you give us everything. Teach us how to follow you; in all we say and all we do. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Christine Lehoullier

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

Children are excused as we sing: **"Go now in peace. Go now in peace. May the love of God surround you everywhere, everywhere you may go."**

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WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

OLD TESTAMENT: Psalm 32

NEW TESTAMENT: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

SERMON: A Lost Detail

#883 The Nicene Creed

WE RESPOND WITH MISSION

We welcome to our worship service the Rev. Dr. David Reynolds and the Rev. Dr. Cal Genzel from Pastoral Counseling Services (PCS) in Manchester, NH. First Parish is a covenant partner with PCS. Dr. Reynolds is stepping back from the Director role and Dr. Genzel is stepping into the Director role. We thank Dr. Reynolds, as we welcome Dr. Genzel.

WE RESPOND WITH SILENCE AND PRAYER

HYMN: # 505 Sweet Hour of Prayer

PASTORAL PRAYER and SILENCE

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

We have been granted more than our fair share of the world's wealth. Often we have forgotten the source of our bounty. We grasp and spend as if all were ours to indulge our desires. This is the time to reexamine our management of what is really God's property, entrusted to us for a little while.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

***DOXOLOGY: #780**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Thank you, God, for proclaiming our worth when we do not value ourselves. Thank you for welcoming us to a celebration of life with so many precious gifts. Thank you now for the privilege of sharing so that others may be led to your joyous embrace. Help us to be generous in gratitude for your lavish provision for all our needs. Amen.

WE GO OUT TO LOVE AND SERVE A LOVING, SERVING GOD

*HYMN: # 419 Now Thank We All Our God

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE "God Be With You"

POSTLUDE (Please remain seated during the Postlude.)

**Indicates all that are able may stand.*

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

DEACON

USHERS

GREETER

SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER

INTERIM DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR

ACCOMPANIST

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Members of the Congregation

Ryan Lehoullier

Stanley & Holly Gorgol, Tom Cooper, Michael Bryan

Diane Dunn

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

Debbie Gline Allen

Christine Lehoullier

Chris Ferrin

Michelle Guerrin

OLD TESTAMENT: Psalm 32

- ¹ Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.
- ² Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
- ³ While I kept silence, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
- ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah*
- ⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and you forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah*
- ⁶ Therefore let all who are faithful
offer prayer to you;
at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters
shall not reach them.
- ⁷ You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. *Selah*
- ⁸ I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.
- ⁹ Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle,
else it will not stay near you.
- ¹⁰ Many are the torments of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.
- ¹¹ Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

NEW TESTAMENT: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." ³ So he told them this parable:

¹¹ Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.'

So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living.

¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have

sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”

²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’

²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’

³¹ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”