



METROCREST

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



**Morning Worship
First Sunday of Lent
February 18, 2024**

Welcome!

To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest;
To all who mourn and long for comfort;
To all who struggle and desire victory;
To all who sin and need a Savior;
To all who are strangers and want fellowship;
And to whoever will come –

*This church opens wide her doors and offers her welcome
in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

God Calls Us To Worship

Call to Worship - Psalm 130:5-8

Leader: I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I hope;

Unison: My soul waits for the LORD more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.

Leader: O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with Him is plentiful redemption.

We Respond To God's Call

Opening Hymn - "Forty Days and Forty Nights"

Trinity Hymnal #2, verses 1-4

Forty days and for-ty nights
Thou wast fast-ing in the wild;
Forty days and for-ty nights
Tempted, and yet un-de-filed.

Sunbeams scorch-ing all the day;
Chilly dew-drops night-ly shed;
Prowling beasts about Thy way;
Stones Thy pil-low; earth Thy bed.

Then if Sa-tan on us press,
Jesus, Sav-ior, hear our call!
Victor in the wild-er-ness,
Grant we may not faint nor fall!

So shall we have peace di-vine:
Holier glad-ness ours shall be;
Round us, too, shall an-gels shine,
Such as min-is-tered to Thee.

Keep, O keep us, Sav-ior dear,
Ever con-stant by Thy side;
That with Thee we may ap-pear
At th'eter-nal East-er-tide.

Acknowledging God's Presence

Worship Theme - "God Forgives Sin and Blasphemy"

Theme Verses - Matthew 12:31

[Jesus said] "...I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven."

Hymn - "And Can It Be That I Should Gain"

Trinity Hymnal #455, verses 1, 3-5

And can it be that I should gain
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

(Refrain)

Amazing love! How can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

He left His Father's throne above
(So free, so infinite His grace!),
Humbled Himself (so great His love!)
And bled for all His chosen race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me. **(Refrain)**

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray;
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee. **(Refrain)**

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach th'eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own. **(Refrain)**

We Confess Our Sins

Call to Confession - Based on Exodus 20:1-17

Leader: Let us recount God's sovereign call to obedience, and pray for His sanctifying mercy.

God spoke these words, and said: I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods but Me.

Unison: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Leader: You shall not make to yourself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them, nor worship them.

Unison: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Leader: You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain.

Unison: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Leader: Remember that you keep holy the Sabbath day.

Unison: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Leader: Honor your father and your mother.

Unison: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Leader: You shall do no murder.

Unison: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Leader: You shall not commit adultery.

Unison: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Leader: You shall not steal.

Unison: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Leader: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Unison: Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Leader: You shall not covet.

Unison: Lord have mercy upon us, and write all these Thy laws in our hearts, we beseech Thee.

Leader: Having recounted God's holy law, let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Confession of Sin

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against Your holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. Have mercy upon us, O Lord: spare all those who confess their faults, and restore all those who are penitent, according to Your promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of Your holy Name. Amen.

Please take a moment for personal reflection and confession.

Assurance of Pardon - Romans 8:1-3a

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.

Hymn - "Man of Sorrows"

Man of sorrows, Lamb of God,
By His own betrayed –
The sin of man and wrath of God
Has been on Jesus laid.

Silent as He stood accused,
Beaten, mocked, and scorned –
Bowling to the Father's will,
He took a crown of thorns.

(Refrain)

Oh, that rugged cross, my salvation
Where Your love poured out over me –
Now my soul cries out, "Hallelujah!
Praise and honor unto Thee."

Sent of heaven, God's own Son
To purchase and redeem
And reconcile the very ones
Who nailed Him to that tree. **(Refrain)**

Now my debt is paid, it is paid in full
By the precious blood that my Jesus spilled.
Now the curse of sin has no hold on me.
Whom the Son sets free, oh is free indeed. **(Refrain)**

See, the stone is rolled away –
Behold the empty tomb.
Hallelujah, God be praised,
He's risen from the grave! **(Refrain)**

We Profess Our Faith And Pray

Affirmation of Faith - Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended to hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the

right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead. 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.

Greeting

Hymn - "What Wondrous Love Is This"

Trinity Hymnal #261

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul;
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul;
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul!

To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb I will sing.
To God and to the Lamb, who is the great I AM,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;
While millions join the theme, I will sing!

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,
And through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
And through eternity I'll sing on!

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

We Receive God's Word

Reading God's Word - Matthew 12:22-32

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Unison: Thanks be to God.

Understanding and Applying God's Word

Pastor Bill Lovell

"God Forgives Sin and Blasphemy"

Sermon Series: "The King & His Kingdom"

We Respond To God's Grace

Offertory Sentence - Hebrews 13:15-16

Through Christ let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that openly profess His Name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Closing Hymn - "Abide with Me"

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, abide with me.

Thou on my head in early youth didst smile.
And, though rebellious and perverse, meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee;
On to the close, Lord, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour.
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, abide with me.

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight; tears lose their bitterness.
Where is thy sting death? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still – abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, Lord, abide with me.

God Sends Us Out With His Blessing

Blessing - Jude 24-25

"**Forty Days and Forty Nights**" Melody attr. to Martin Herbst, harmony by William H. Monk, words by George H. Smyttan. "**And Can it Be that I Should Gain**" Words by Charles Wesley, Music by Thomas Campbell. "**Man of Sorrows**" Words and Music by Brooke Ligertwood and Matt Crocker – © 2012 Hillsong Music Publishing Australia. All rights reserved. "**What Wondrous Love Is This**" Words and music anonymous. "**Abide with Me**" Words by Henry Lyte, alt. by Justin Smith, Music by Justin Smith – © 2007 Justin Smith Music. Used by permission. All rights reserved. CCLI License #451603.

Sermon Text

English Standard Version - Matthew 12:22-32

22 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to Him, and He healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons." 25 Knowing their thoughts, He said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. 30 Whoever is not with Me is against Me, and whoever does not gather with Me scatters. 31 Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."

Greek New Testament - Matthew 12:22-32

22 Τότε προσηνέχθη αὐτῷ δαιμονιζόμενος τυφλὸς καὶ κωφός· καὶ ἔθεράπευσεν αὐτόν, ὥστε τὸν κωφὸν λαλεῖν καὶ βλέπειν. 23 καὶ ἐξίσταντο πάντες οἱ ὄχλοι καὶ ἔλεγον, Μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς Δαυὶδ; 24 οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἀκούσαντες εἶπον, Οὗτος οὐκ ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ Βεελζεβούλ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων. 25 εἰδὼς δὲ τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Πᾶσα βασιλεία μερισθεῖσα καθ' ἑαυτῆς ἐρημοῦται, καὶ πᾶσα πόλις ἢ οἰκία μερισθεῖσα καθ' ἑαυτῆς οὐ σταθήσεται. 26 καὶ εἰ ὁ Σατανᾶς τὸν Σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλει, ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν ἐμερίσθη· πῶς οὖν σταθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ; 27 καὶ εἰ ἐγὼ ἐν Βεελζεβούλ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν ἐν τίνι ἐκβάλλουσιν; διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοὶ κριταὶ ἔσονται ὑμῶν. 28 εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. 29 ἢ πῶς δύναται τις εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἰσχυροῦ καὶ τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ ἀρπάσαι, ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον δῆσῃ τὸν ἰσχυρόν; καὶ τότε τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ διαρπάσει. 30 ὁ μὴ ὦν μετ' ἐμοῦ κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐστιν, καὶ ὁ μὴ συνάγων μετ' ἐμοῦ σκορπίζει. 31 Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν, πᾶσα ἁμαρτία καὶ βλασφημία ἀφεθήσεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἡ δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος βλασφημία οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται. 32 καὶ ὃς ἐὰν εἴπῃ λόγον κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ· ὃς δ' ἂν εἴπῃ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ οὔτε ἐν τούτῳ τῷ αἰῶνι οὔτε ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι.

Sermon Notes

Matthew 12:22-32

Pastor Bill Lovell

"God Forgives Sin and Blasphemy"

Sermon Series: "The King & His Kingdom"

Forgivable Sins (vv 22-31a)

The One Unforgivable Sin (vv 31b-32)

"Whatever the unpardonable sin may be, and perhaps it is different in every person — perhaps it is a point of sin in each one, a filling up of his measure, beyond which there is no more hope of God's mercy — whatever it is, there is one thing that is sure, that no man who feels his need of Christ and sincerely desires to be saved, can have committed that sin at all." Charles Spurgeon, Comments on Matthew 12:31-32

Church Life Notes

Today - February 18, 2024

1. **First Sunday of Lent:** Today is the first Sunday of Lent, a season of forty weekdays, leading up to Easter Sunday, March 31. Calling to mind the forty days of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, we will be reflecting on the reality of our sinfulness and mortality, and Christ's sinlessness and mercy. As part of our reflection, please take a copy of MPC's 2024 Lenten Advisory.
2. **Serving Today:** This morning's scheduled Liturgy Leader is Jay Marble. Our scheduled Prayer Leader is James Woods.
3. **Giving Online:** To access our secure online giving portal, you may use the QR code on the back of the bulletin.
4. **Life Change Sunday:** Today's special Life Change offering will go to support Paul Miller and Metanoia Prison Ministry (a ministry of the PCA through Mission to North America). Their mission is to engage, educate, and equip the church for the discipleship, mentoring, and reintegration of prisoners. The Life Change basket will be in the front of the sanctuary this week. If you prefer, you can write a check with "Life Change" written in the memo line, or you can give online via Realm.
5. **MPC Youth Ministry:** Tonight, our large group meeting for middle and high school youth will meet from 6:00-8:00pm at the church. **Cross Training will continue this Sunday.** If any youth are interested in singing or playing an instrument in youth group, please join us at the church at 5:15pm.

Upcoming Activities & Events

6. **MPC Sunday School for All Ages:** Please join us Sunday mornings between 9:00-10:00am.
 - **Children** - Pre-K-Grade 5 - Solid Bible teaching from the Children's Catechism, age appropriate and fun.
 - **Youth** - Grades 6-12 - Mature reflection on the Bible and the Westminster Shorter Catechism.
 - **Adult** - Highly interactive study of "The Gospel According to Isaiah"—led by Will Grover.
7. **Ladies Night Out:** Please join us for our Ladies' Night Out this **Wednesday, February 21, at 7:00pm**, at The Grind (2500 King Arthur Blvd. #100 The Colony 75056). Enjoy food, fun, fellowship, and the chance to get to know other Christian women.
8. **Women's Bible Study:** MPC's Women's Bible Study meets at 7:00pm on Tuesday nights at the church. The study will also be available via Zoom. We will study 1 and 2 Kings using the guide "What A Royal Mess" by Susan Tyner. Call or email Melodie Bajema to register and receive the study book (214-669-7135 or rbajema5@sbcglobal.net).

9. **Men's Book Group:** Interested men meet **on Tuesday evenings at the church** to study Jimmy Davis' ***Cruciform: Living the Cross-Shaped Life***. For info, contact Paul Hartgrove (972-816-2205 - paul.hartgrove@gmail.com).
10. **Chili Cook-Off and Square Dance:** Please join us for this long-time MPC favorite, set for 5:30pm on Saturday, March 2! Everyone is invited to cook their best chili recipe and bring it to the church to share in a friendly competition. We will also enjoy great old-time Square Dancing with a professional caller. Sign-ups are available in the lobby.

News & Needs

11. **Human Coalition Partnership:** MPC is supporting the pro-life activities of Human Coalition as they reach out to needy families. Watch for flyers around the church.
12. **Safeguarding Committee:** MPC is committed to being a community that is free of sexual harassment. If you are harassed at church, contact **Diane Kizziar** (972-213-5391, dianekizziar@gmail.com) or **Paul Hartgrove** (972-816-2205, paul.hartgrove@gmail.com).

High Fives & Thanks

13. **Concert Series:** High five to Caleb Esmond for last Sunday's beautiful piano recital with acclaimed pianist Zhaohan Wang.

Prayer Requests

14. **For The World:**
 - **Armed Conflicts** - For God's mercy on the suffering people in Israel, Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, and Yemen.
15. **For Our Church's Mission and Ministry:**
 - **MPC Deacons** - For God's blessing on Dalton Dallas, Vianny D'Souza, Will Grover, and Brian Ray.
 - **Church Finances** - For God's provision.
16. **For One Another:**
 - **Health Issues** - For God's blessing on Yvonne Alford (Bill Lovell's friend), Connie Bielefeld (Margaret Marrs' grandmother), Kerry Buswell, Kathy Carruth (Rick Carruth's mom), Jim Huckaby (Colton Huckaby's grandfather), Max Kizziar, Suzanne Larsen, Cherry Leslie, Marcia Livingston (David Wamsley's sister), Ruth Lerner (Elinor Hites' sister), Ariel Lopez, Ashley Marble, Alana Marion, Jeannie Marion (Mike Marion's stepmom), Mike Marion, Tom Mayfield, Lauren Muckleroy (friend of Scott Marrs), Ryan & Dianna Muller (friends of Alana Marion), Kristen Novak (Steve & Liz Wallin's daughter), Carol Revell, John Revell, Chip Sayers, David Wamsley, Marlene Wamsley, Lori Winn, and Norm Winn; and also for God's blessing on Lydia Judith and new mom and dad, Madeleine and Caleb Esmond.

Welcome to Metrocrest! Please take a few moments to leave your contact information with Pastor Bill or a member of the Welcome Team. We would love to know that you worshipped with us today.



How can we pray for you? MPC is a praying church! You can share your prayer requests with us by (1) using one of the cards found in the lobby; or (2) pointing your smartphone camera at this QR code to access a digital card. Please indicate whether your request is private or public. You may also request to pray with an Elder.

Do you want to make a donation? To fund MPC's mission and ministry, we depend on God's provision through you. If you'd like to make a donation this morning, you can do so by (1) placing it in the collection basket during the Offertory; or (2) pointing your smartphone camera at this QR code to access our secure online giving portal.



Thank you for your financial support! At MPC, we aim for financial transparency. Here's where we stand this fiscal year (July-June): Last week's giving - \$5,291; weekly giving goal - \$7,885; actual giving to-date - \$236,238; and projected giving to-date - \$260,192. Please be as generous as you can in your personal stewardship, and please pray for God's faithful provision.



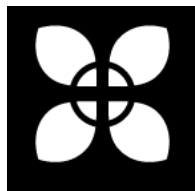
Let's get connected! MPC uses an app called Realm to allow you to update your personal information, communicate with groups and teams, follow church announcements, look up members, manage online giving, and join events. To get started, contact us at info@metrocrestchurch.org

The Session (Elders)

Rick Bajema
Bill Camp
Rick Carruth
John Fowler
Paul Hartgrove
Bill Lovell
Larry Perry
James Woods

The Board of Deacons

Dalton Dallas
Vianny D'Souza
Will Grover
Brian Ray



Bill Lovell

Laura Stites
Nick Rhodes
Will Grover
Joseph Marble
Paul Hartgrove
Diane Kizziar

Pastor
Administrative Assistant
Music Director
Treasurer
Youth Director
Safeguarding Committee
Safeguarding Committee

bill@metrocrestchurch.org
laura@metrocrestchurch.org
nick@metrocrestchurch.org
treasurer@metrocrestchurch.org
joseph@metrocrestchurch.org
paul.hartgrove@gmail.com
dianekizziar@gmail.com