

Welcome to Niskayuna Reformed Church
March 27, 2022
4th Sunday of Lent

Preparation for Worship

O Lord, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights; give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory; who livest and reignest, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. AMEN Book of Common Order, Church of Scotland

The Approach to God

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Welcome and announcements.

The Prelude: Jesus Paid It All

Sewell/Grape

Introit

Votum: Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
Amen

The Call to Worship: (*Psalm 23*)

Leader: The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

People: He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters

Leader: he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

People: Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

Leader: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

People: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

*A Hymn: Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken

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*The Salutation and People's Amen: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession: **Father in Heaven, we confess that we do not understand suffering. We see pain as evil and miss your word in it. Let not our sin increase by rejection of you when we hurt. Grant us the sight that goes beyond joy and pain. Let us see you in all of life. Have mercy upon us and forgive our sin. In Jesus Name. AMEN**

Kyrie Eleison: **Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Words of Assurance

*Gloria Patri: **Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

Anthem: Here I am Lord
Dedicated to Bob Gardner

Arr. Hayes

The Word of God

The Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Lesson:

Psalm 107

Epistle Lesson:

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Junior Sermon

Gospel Lesson:

Luke 15:11-32

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*A Hymn

O Come and Mourn with Me Awhile

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Sermon:

“Songs in a Strange Land: Suffering”

A Prayer for Blessing upon the Word

The Response of God's People

Offering

Offertory

What Sorrow is This?

Nygard

*Doxology 544 and Prayer of Consecration

The Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

* Hymn

Cross of Jesus, Cross of Sorrow

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*The Benediction

Benediction Response

The Postlude:

The Lord Is My Shepherd

Denton/Koschat

*Please stand if you are able.

Announcements

Lent is a season of penitence. The word is not used much now and has come to mean simply a feeling - being sorry, regretting, etc. Penitence, however, is not a **feeling**, it is an **act**. "The undergoing of some discipline, voluntary or imposed by spiritual authority, in an outward expression of repentance." says the Oxford English Dictionary. Psalms is the book in which penitence lives. During Lent, the Lectionary readings will be read but they will be tangential in the sermon. "Songs in a Strange Land", penitence in our strange world as focused by Psalms will be our Lenten journey. The five will be: Psalm 22; Psalm 23; Psalm 130; Psalm 107; and Psalm 24.

Reverend Rett Zabriskie will be in the office on Thursday mornings from 9-10:30. Otherwise, any time the American flag is flying outside the parsonage, you are welcome to stop over and come right in! You can reach him by calling his cell at 201.819.7629. Please call him directly to set up visits. To help Rev. Zabriskie learn our names, we ask that you wear your name tags on Sundays. If you need a name tag, please contact Ellen.

For three Sundays in Lent, we are going to have an extended conversation between me and you on the general topic of the future of the Christian Church in general and NRC in particular. These sessions are going to be "Coffee Hour Conversations", in the hope that all manner and sorts of people can participate - including families and kids. For the three sessions, Coffee Hour will begin as usual - however after 15 minutes of the normal chat at tables, I am going to ask that we have a group conversation. We already had the two sessions on March 6, 2022: Session I "I just feel at home here" Gathering Language for Talking About a Congregation and March 20, 2022: Session II "Back to the Family Farm"

LAST SESSION: April 3, 2022: Session III "Whad'Ya Know?"

Pastor Rett is offering a short series of confirmation classes for any students in 8th grade or above that wish to participate. Confirmation Class is intended to nurture young people in the faith and practice of Christianity. Particular emphasis will be given to understanding the Christian religion as it now lives in a pluralistic society of many religions. Confirmation Class prepares persons to confirm the Baptismal vows taken for them as infants, or to be baptized, and to confess the Christian faith for themselves. The Board of Elders of the Niskayuna Reformed Church will receive into membership those who choose to make profession of faith. The format for the class will be informal conversation on what

constitutes Life, Art, Science, Morals, etc. with occasional readings and field trips appropriate to the needs and interests of those who gather. We will gather in a local coffee shop, time and place to be decided by those who choose to participate. If you have interest in participating in this series, please contact Sabrina at christianed@niskayunareformed.org for more information. This is a great opportunity to learn and grow in your faith. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

With Spring around the corner(hopefully), SiCM's collection for March will be dedicated to "Spring Cleaning". All cleaning supplies welcome, from sponges and dish detergent to mops and dryer sheets. Supplemental food cards do not cover these items, making it difficult for families already struggling. Thank you for continuing kindness and generosity to our Schenectady neighbors.

Our **March Mission** will benefit the works of the NRC's History & Archives Committee. The Mission of the committee is to promote awareness of the rich history of Niskayuna Reformed Church as a place of worship and fellowship and preserve historical records and artifacts for the congregation, community and future generations. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

The M&SC will have a **Special Mission Collection** to support the ongoing needs of Ukraine. The collection will run through the end of April. We will use the collection box in the Narthex, and it will have the colors of Ukraine on it. The monies collected will benefit the needs of our local Ukrainian churches through the 518Ukrainians.com website. If you would like to donate in other ways, their info sheet is attached. NRC has opted to collect money rather than items at this time with the hope of being able to help defray their costs of shipping goods they collect. You may also donate via PayPal and mark it as Mission Offering. ***PLEASE EMAIL OR CALL ELLEN TO LET HER KNOW THAT IT SHOULD GO TOWARDS UKRAINE COLLECTION AND NOT THE REGULAR MISSION OF THE MONTH!***

We will not be ordering memorial azaleas and lilies for Easter this year. We will ***still*** be doing an Easter Memorial bulletin. We will be working off last year's bulletin. If you have **NO** changes to your memorial from last year and you want it to remain the same, there is no need to contact the office. If there are any changes or you would like to add a memorial, please contact Ellen at office@niskayunareformed.org or 518-785-5575 by April 1st.

We would like to announce to the membership that we are planning on having our first Brooks BBQ of the season. It will be **Wednesday, April 20th, 3 PM – SOLD OUT**. We need volunteers to help us the day of the BBQ. There will be a

need for inside help: assembling the chicken dinners, bagging dinners, and transporting dinners to the pickup tables. Outside help: ticket sales, traffic direction, and runners to take assembled dinners to the cars. A person will also be needed to keep track of the number of dinners sold. Back by popular demand: BROWNIES!!! Baking and donating brownies is a great way to help if you can't volunteer the day of the BBQ. We need you to bake at least 3 dozen brownies without nuts, cut them into approximately 3 x 3 squares and put them into individual plastic baggies. If you can volunteer April 20th, between 3 and 6PM, there will be signup sheets for volunteering and baking brownies in the main hall of the Education Building. If you are unable to make it into church and would like to volunteer in some way, please call me (Kim Cerone) @ 518-339-7504 or email me at purdyka@aol.com. Please leave your name and contact information, and I will get back to you. Don't feel bad if you are unable to volunteer, you can always swing in and purchase a great meal.

Dinners (half chicken, baked potato, coleslaw, roll/butter, and brownie):
\$15.00

Half Chicken only: **\$10.00**

The NRC Sunday School will be collecting pocket change for UNICEF on Sundays during Lent. UNICEF does many good works but is currently providing assistance to children impacted by the military occupation in Ukraine. Donations can be placed in collection receptacles during Coffee Hour. Sunday School students will also be walking around each Sunday to collect change. We sincerely appreciate your generous donations!

Parents with infants and small children are reminded of the room behind the balcony with an audio system to hear the worship service if needed.

Scripture

Psalm 107

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever.

² Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
those he redeemed from trouble

³ and gathered in from the lands,

from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.^[a]

⁴ Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to an inhabited town;

⁵ hungry and thirsty,
their soul fainted within them.

⁶ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress;

⁷ he led them by a straight way,
until they reached an inhabited town.

⁸ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.

⁹ For he satisfies the thirsty,
and the hungry he fills with good things.

¹⁰ Some sat in darkness and in gloom,
prisoners in misery and in irons,

¹¹ for they had rebelled against the words of God,
and spurned the counsel of the Most High.

¹² Their hearts were bowed down with hard labor;
they fell down, with no one to help.

¹³ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress;

¹⁴ he brought them out of darkness and gloom,
and broke their bonds asunder.

¹⁵ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.

¹⁶ For he shatters the doors of bronze,
and cuts in two the bars of iron.

¹⁷ Some were sick^[b] through their sinful ways,
and because of their iniquities endured affliction;

¹⁸ they loathed any kind of food,
and they drew near to the gates of death.

¹⁹ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress;

²⁰ he sent out his word and healed them,
and delivered them from destruction.

²¹ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.

²² And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices,
and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.

²³ Some went down to the sea in ships,
doing business on the mighty waters;

²⁴ they saw the deeds of the LORD,
his wondrous works in the deep.

²⁵ For he commanded and raised the stormy wind,
which lifted up the waves of the sea.

²⁶ They mounted up to heaven, they went down to the depths;
their courage melted away in their calamity;

²⁷ they reeled and staggered like drunkards,
and were at their wits' end.

²⁸ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he brought them out from their distress;

²⁹ he made the storm be still,
and the waves of the sea were hushed.

³⁰ Then they were glad because they had quiet,
and he brought them to their desired haven.

³¹ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.

³² Let them extol him in the congregation of the people,
and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

³³ He turns rivers into a desert,
springs of water into thirsty ground,

³⁴ a fruitful land into a salty waste,
because of the wickedness of its inhabitants.

³⁵ He turns a desert into pools of water,
a parched land into springs of water.

³⁶ And there he lets the hungry live,
and they establish a town to live in;

³⁷ they sow fields, and plant vineyards,
and get a fruitful yield.

³⁸ By his blessing they multiply greatly,
and he does not let their cattle decrease.

³⁹ When they are diminished and brought low
through oppression, trouble, and sorrow,

⁴⁰ he pours contempt on princes
and makes them wander in trackless wastes;

⁴¹ but he raises up the needy out of distress,
and makes their families like flocks.

⁴² The upright see it and are glad;
and all wickedness stops its mouth.

⁴³ Let those who are wise give heed to these things,
and consider the steadfast love of the LORD.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view;^[a] even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view,^[b] we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself,^[c] not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Luke 15:11-32

¹¹ Then Jesus^[a] 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^[b] 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; ¹⁹ I 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.’^[c] 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^[d] 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.'"