

**Welcome to Niskayuna Reformed Church
February 25, 2024
Second Sunday of Lent
Rev. Dr. Sherri & Rev. Michael Meyer-Veen**

The Approach to God

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

Welcome and announcements

Prelude Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether

Charles Callahan

Introit

Votum

Suzi O'Brien

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

Call to Worship (Responsive):

Lord, we have gathered in person and online to worship you –

to sing your praises and hear your Word,

to confess our sins and receive your mercy,

to offer our gifts, and our prayers.

and to be blessed by your benediction,

as we go out to follow the way of Jesus.

Help us to surrender our certainties,

that we may find a way to wonder.

Confirm in us the truth by which we rightly live,

Confront us with the truth from which we wrongly turn.

Help us to abdicate our own agendas,

that we may consider your calling.

We ask not for what we want,

but for what you know we need.

Come let us worship the LORD,

and walk in Christ's way!

*Hymn of Worship "All the Way My Savior Leads Me"

The Hymnbook, 365

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

Call to Confession:

The Psalmist reminds us
that God does not despise the affliction of the afflicted;
nor does God hide from us but hears us when we cry.
In confession of our sins let us share our affliction
in the promise that God hears us and won't turn away.

Prayer of Confession (Responsive):

Lord God, because Jesus has taught us to trust you in all things,
we hold to his word and share his plea:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where nations budget for war while Christ says, "Put up your sword":

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where countries waste food and covet fashion,
while Christ says, "I was hungry...I was thirsty...":

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where powerful governments claim their policies are heaven blessed,
while scripture states that God helps the powerless:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where Christians seek the kingdom in the shape of their own church,
as if Christ had come to build and not break barriers:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where we, obsessed with being adult,
forget to become like children:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where our prayers falter, our faith weakens, and our light grows dim:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Where Jesus Christ calls us:

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Lord God, you have declared that your kingdom is among us.

In your mercy, open our ears to hear it, our hands to serve it, our hearts to hold it.

This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Kyrie Eleison:

Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have mercy upon us.

Words of Assurance: Philippians 3:10-11

“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

*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

Holy Lord of All

Williams

The Word of God

Junior Sermon

Prayer for Illumination

New Testament Reading:

Philippians 3:7-11

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

*Gospel Reading

Mark 8:31-38

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

Sermon Shaped By The Cross: “Loving Losers”

Pastor Mike

A Prayer for Blessing Upon the Word

*Hymn of Worship “Have Thine Own Way, Lord”

The Hymnbook, 302

The Response of God's People

The Offering

Offertory My Shepherd Will Supply my Need Thomson

*The Doxology 544 and Prayer of Consecration

The Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Prayers of the people and 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 of Worship “My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

The Hymnbook, 378

*The Benediction

Benediction Response

*The Postlude Trumpet Tune

Charles Callahan

(*)Please stand if you are able.



Call To Worship and Prayer of Confession adapted from: A Wee Worship Book. Wildgoose Publications, 1999.

Cover Art: *Jesus carries the cross* © James B Janknegt.

Announcements

Discipleship small groups online Monday evenings and in person Tuesday mornings will continue until March 18 & 19. If you are interested, please speak with Pastor Mike.

Our February Mission benefits our own mission group. The Mission and Service Committee will use the donations for our 2024 "Soup Kitchen" expenses. Our church members volunteer at the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen up to 8 times a year. These dedicated volunteers shop, prepare and serve nutritious meals to the hungry. The average monthly cost to provide the food for the meals in 2023 was \$330. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Thank you! Our March Mission will be Safe, Inc. More details to follow.

We are having soup and bread Lenten evenings on Thursdays until Maundy Thursday, March 28. They will begin at 6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. These evenings will include a light soup and bread supper and a brief time of worship and prayer using "Seeking God's Face." We will conclude before the Choir rehearsal begins. All are welcome! We are still in need of volunteers to help provide soup and bread each week. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex. Thank you!

Easter lilies (\$15.00) and azaleas (\$20.00) are now on sale. If you would like to purchase a plant(s), please send your check and a note saying you will be taking home a plant(s) to the church office. We are also taking donations to cover the cost of the plants we need to purchase. PLEASE HELP US TO CONTINUE THIS BEAUTIFUL TRADITION. We will be doing a memorial bulletin and working off last year's bulletin. If you have NO changes, there is no need to contact the office. If you have any changes/additions, contact Ellen at 518-785-5575. **The deadline for bulletin changes is Friday, March 22nd.** The bulletin will be included in the March 31 Easter Service bulletin.

Join the Schenectady City Mission on March 16 from 6-10 PM at the 408 in Saratoga for an exciting musical event. The group Dueling Pianos will be performing their magic, music and helping our community at the same time. RSVP by February 28. More information can be found at [CityMission.com/Dueling Pianos](http://CityMission.com/DuelingPianos).

Scripture

Philippians 3:7-11

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in^[a] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Mark 8:31-38

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.” ³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange

for their soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."