

Hopewell UMC  
February 21, 2021  
*First Sunday in Lent*

**Instrumental Music**

**Welcome**

**Pastor Wendy**

**Announcements**

**Pastor Wendy**

**Call to Worship** (by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org)

God meets us in the night—

**Before the sun rises,  
Before the wound heals,  
Before there are answers,  
Before there is closure.**

God meets us in the light—

**Where joy is effervescent,  
Where laughter is contagious,  
Where flowers bloom from cracks in the sidewalk,  
And where people gather around the table.**

God meets us at the threshold—

**At the edge of the water,  
At the beginning of the wilderness,  
At the start of something new,  
On the edge of faith.**

And if God meets us in all those places,

Then surely God meets us in between—

**Staying with us through the wilderness.**

We are not alone. God is all around.

**Let us worship the God of the here and now.**

**Opening Hymn**

**Great is Thy Faithfulness**

**UMH 140**

**Call to Confession**

Again and again, God meets us where we are.

God's love knows no bounds, which is hard for us to understand and easy for us to forget.

Therefore, in confession we remember together that we are not alone.

And in a unified voice, we once again ask for God's grace in that holy reminder.

Family of faith, please pray with me.

**Prayer of Confession** (by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org)

**God who meets us where we are—  
There is nowhere we can go that you are not.  
You were with Jesus at his baptism.  
You were with him in the wilderness,  
And even in between, you were there,  
Saying aloud, “This is my beloved.”**

**We know that you are with us too—  
In the good, the bad, and everything in between—  
But so often we act like we are alone.  
Instead of coming to you with our hurt,  
We hold it in or cast it onto others.  
Instead of coming to you with our joy,  
We credit ourselves and offer you nothing.**

**How can we long for a deeper relationship with you  
While living like you are nowhere to be found?  
Forgive our self-centered ways.  
Remind us that in every breath, in every step, you are there.**

**You are the God who meets us where we are.  
Before and behind, above and below, within and around. Amen.**

**Words of Forgiveness** (by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org)

**Family of faith, if you hear nothing else today, hear this:  
God is here. God sees you. God knows you. God meets you at the edge of every new  
beginning, And God calls you beloved.  
We are washed by the water.  
We are called beloved.  
Thanks be to God for a love like that.**

**Music**

**“Jesus Loves Me”**

**Children’s Moment**

**Hymn**

**Spirit Song**

**UMH 347**

**Pastoral Prayer & 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## Old Testament Lesson Genesis 9:8-17

<sup>8</sup>Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, <sup>9</sup>“As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. <sup>11</sup>I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

<sup>12</sup>God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: <sup>13</sup>I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, <sup>15</sup>I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup>When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” <sup>17</sup>God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

## Gospel Lesson Mark 1:9-15

<sup>9</sup>In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup>And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. <sup>11</sup>And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” <sup>12</sup>And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup>He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

<sup>14</sup>Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

This is the word of God for all God’s people, **thanks be to God.**

## Sermon

### *Again & Again, God Meets Us*

## Hymn

### Take Time to Be Holy

UMH 395

**Affirmation of Faith** (by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org)

**We believe in a God who is everywhere and right here,  
Bigger than the sky and in the smallest details,  
All at once and in every moment.**

**We believe that God meets us where we are—  
In heartbreak and high hopes,  
Around crowded tables and in quiet homes,  
In joy and in suffering,  
In loneliness and in connection,  
In sanctuaries and in living rooms,  
In marches and in waiting rooms.**

**We believe that nothing we do or leave undone  
Can distance us from God's love.  
God is forever drawing us close and pulling us in.  
Again and again, God meets us where we are  
And invites us into wholeness.  
Thanks be to God for a love like that.**

**Spoken Benediction** (Adapted, by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org)

As you leave this space,  
May your mouth speak of God's goodness.  
May your arms hold those in need.  
May your feet walk toward justice.  
May your heart trust its worth.  
May your soul dance in God's grace.  
And may this be your rhythm—  
Again and again and again,  
Until God's promised day.  
Remember this...for some in this world, love is a stranger, may they find us to be the  
most generous of friends.  
In the name of God the Lover, Jesus the Beloved Son, and the Holy Illuminator, Love  
itself,  
Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.  
Amen.

**Musical Benediction      "Go Now in Peace"**

*As our time of worship together ends, our praise for God continues and our worship  
through witness and service in the world begins.*

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