

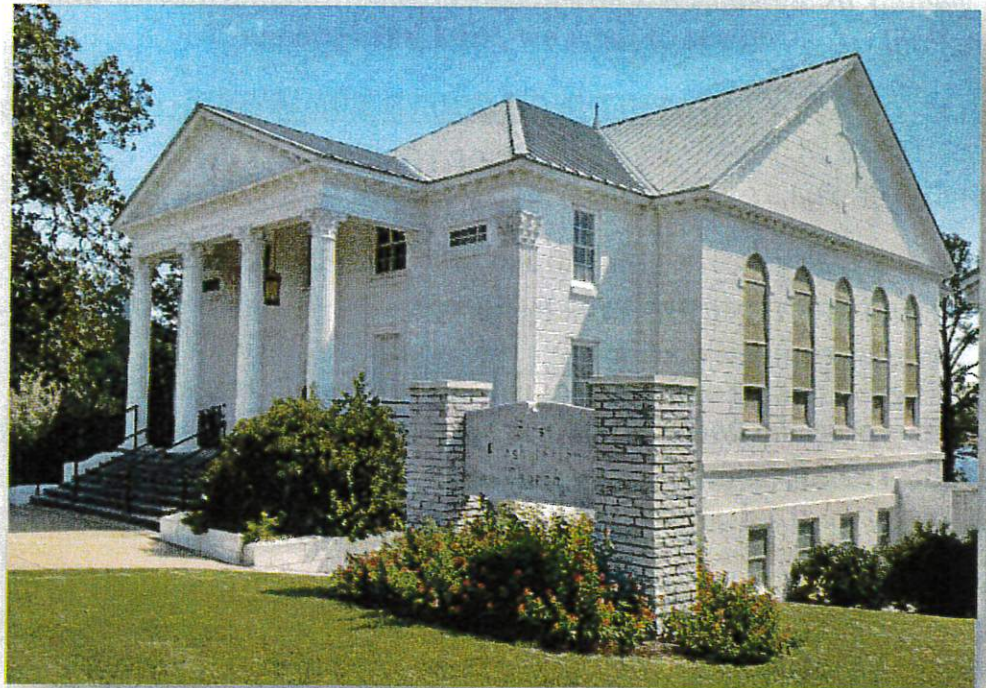
## **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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## ***Worship Guide***

March 6, 2022

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If you are curious, and have come to see  
If you are weary, and have come to rest  
If you are grateful, and have come to share  
If you are hurting, and have come for solace  
If you are listening, and have come to pray  
If you are seeking and have come for answers...Welcome!

Moderator: Rev. Steven H. Rhodes

# A Service for the Worship of God

Sunday, 11:00 A.M

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent

March 6, 2022

*"Communities of faith that last over time are built by people who are faithful to one another and committed to a shared purpose. Our lives are knit together not so much by intense feeling as by shared history, tasks, commitments, stories and sacrifices." Dr. Christine Pohl*

## GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

\*GATHERING SENTENCES: from Psalm 92

Leader: It is good to praise the Lord!

**People: It is good to sing and make music of your name, O most High!**

Leader: Let us proclaim God's faithfulness this day!

**People: Let us sing for joy at the works of God's hands!**

\*HYMN # 215 (*all verses*) .....*When Morning Gilds the Skies*

\*MORNING PRAYER

\*A CALL TO LAY DOWN OUR BURDENS BEFORE GOD

\*UNISON PRAYER

**Once again, Gracious God we come before you in humility. As this new season of Lenten reflection begins, we confess that too many of our plans are centered around us, not you. We have failed to pray as Mary did, "Let it be as you will Lord. Forgive us, and remind us that our hope, our only hope, is in putting Jesus first in our life. Amen.**

\*ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

Leader: The World is clear, we are forgiven and set free in Christ Jesus.

**All: Thank be to God.**

\*GLORIA PATRI (#813)

**"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, Amen."**

**PROCLAIMING THE WORD**

*CHILDREN'S MESSAGE*

\*HYMN #459 (Sing2x) .....We Remember You

PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING (#633)

**Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,  
To reach out and touch Him, and say that we love Him.  
Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.  
Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.**

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Page 518.....Psalm 91:1-4 (in unison)

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING Page 57.....Luke 4:1-13 (in unison)

MESSAGE....." Going Deeper – Part 1" ..... Rev. Steven H. Rhodes

**RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: The Apostle's Creed

**I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I Believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE - 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**

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

(Please continue to place your offering in the plate in the front of the narthex)

\*DOXOLOGY

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; praise God above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

\*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

ANTHEM....."Come and Feast" .....Lee Dengler

**INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: And also with you.**

**People: We lift them up to the Lord.**

**People: It is right to give God  
Our thanks and praise.**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

PARTAKING OF THE ELEMENTS

PRAYER

**BEARING AND FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD**

\*HYMN #429 (*all verses*).....They'll Know We Are Christians

\*BENEDICTION

\*CHORAL RESPONSE..... *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus*

\*POSTLUDE

**Welcome!** We are glad you have come today. We pray that you will experience God's love and grace as you worship with us. Members and visitors, please record your presence on the Fellowship pad in the pews. If you would like to learn more about our church, please indicate your interest when the Fellowship Pads are passed. You may also speak to a minister or an usher at the conclusion of the service. We would love to help you become connected with our community of faith.

**Children's Worship:** Every Sunday following our Children's message, those children, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade or younger, can either choose to continue to worship with their families or go to Children's Church downstairs in the Education Building. Children can be picked up from there after the worship service.

**Nursery Care** is available downstairs in the Education Building.

## “Going Deeper – Part 1”

Rev. Steven H. Rhodes

March 6, 2022

For the next six weeks my desire is to draw us deeper into our faith so that we might experience more fully the grace that comes to us in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Let us pray.

Now, the Bible has words that are misunderstood, one of those is ‘meek’.

We do not use it much in everyday language anymore. In church we hear it most often in the Beatitudes. ‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.’

Recently, I came across a paraphrase of the Beatitudes by Rev. Mark Ramsey...it seemed, at first, anyway, closer to how things really work, listen:

‘Blessed are the good looking for they will have plenty of friends, blessed are those who make it up the corporate ladder, for they will be esteemed, blessed are those who invest shrewdly, for they will have a comfortable retirement, blessed are those who are free, blessed are the happy, blessed are those with a good education.’

OK, Jesus never said anything like that. What he said was: ‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth’.

But do they? Is that how our world really works? The dictionary defines ‘meek’ as: gentle, easily imposed on, tame, submissive, yielding, acquiescent. I think most people who read that definition would say, ‘Thanks, but no thanks’.

All of you know by now that our oldest daughter Katy has MS. Here is what you don’t know. The day Katy was rushed to the hospital they had no idea what was wrong with her. One of the ER docs thought she had overdosed on some drug. I mean, after all, she was a 19 year old college student, right? Yet test after test revealed nothing.

So, I found out the name of one of the doctors, and finally, in a not so meek voice, I asked who was in charge and demanded to see the doctor. He said, it must be something neurological, and I should contact a neurologist.

Now the problem was that Katy was in a Jacksonville hospital and we lived in Pace Fl. We didn't know any doctors there. So, I started calling neurologists. One after another said their next appointment was 6 to 8 weeks away. Frustrated does not even begin to describe how I felt.

Finally, I got one nurse on the phone and literally, with tears, begged her to talk to the doctor. She did, and I took Katy to his office.

It took him 30 minutes to diagnose her and promptly sent us to another the hospital for other tests and a spinal tap to confirm his diagnosis.

So, blessed are the meek? Really?

As I look out over this congregation today, I see people who have started successful businesses, earned PHD's, who teach successfully in schools and are changing students' lives, some who have had successful military, others who manage offices and develop county wide programs...those things did not happen because you were submissive or tame or easily imposed on.

So, what does it mean that the 'meek shall inherit the earth', when it appears too often the meek just get covered over by it.

Now, let me pause here. If you believe the best way to navigate this life is to impose your will and beliefs on others, that you have to demand what you want, to insist on your rights - then meekness, as we usually think about it, will make no sense.

However, if you believe that Jesus conquered death, that everyone you meet is the subject of God's love, just like you, then Jesus' invitation to meekness means something very different than tame or compliant.

I believe CS Lewis, the 20<sup>th</sup> century Christian apologist may have said it best, "Meekness is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less", once again "Meekness is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less".

Do you get it? Meekness is not another word for weakness. It is an act of humility and trust in the face of life's challenges, it is a condition of your heart.

Jesus experience in the wilderness draws it into focus for us. As we read earlier, before Jesus' ministry even started the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert. For 40 days he fasted, and every day he was tempted by the devil, evil swirled around him.

Only then did the real temptations come...

'The devil says, turn this stone into bread, come on Jesus...don't be meek and mild - just do it'.

Then the devil said, 'Look out over the horizon, all this can be yours, you can dictate whatever you want, insist on your own way Jesus - don't be meek and mild - Just do it'.

Then the devil said, 'Throw yourself off the top of the temple and show the people you can save yourself' - don't be meek and mild, just do it.'

Do you get it? Jesus was tempted with kingdoms and power and glory, and so are we. The temptation is to have the right to control our life without having to answer to anyone, even God. This is why Jesus taught the disciples to pray, "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory". Less of me, God, more of you.

Yes, CS Lewis got it right: "Meekness is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less". In other words, you can be meek, and be highly successful.

Listen we have all had wilderness experiences, we have all been tempted and succumbed to the temptation to be in control to get our own way. However, thanks be to God, our wilderness experiences are not the end of our story!

How do we say it at the end of our great Creed? We 'believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting'.

It is with that belief we come to the table today, we come in meekness and hope and celebrate the goodness of God and the joy of our life together.