

## God's People Are Sent

**\*Closing Song**                      Wade in the Water

### **\*Benediction**

Leader: And let all God's People say...

**People: Alleluia, Amen!**

**\*Response**                      Walk With Me This Day, Lord

### **Postlude**



Our spiritual this week is "Wade in the Water," a lively song that, like many of the African American spirituals, has layers of meaning. Those enslaved had been brought to this country chained in the holds of ships, like cargo. They suffered in sickness and darkness across the perilous middle passage. Crossing the Ohio River was the path to freedom on the Underground Railway. The imagery of water appears often in the spirituals, and in this one it serves in two ways. The chorus, "Wade in the water, children; God's gonna trouble the water," refers to the story in the gospel reading, in which the troubled waters bring healing. The verses make reference to the Israelites, who were on the run from their Egyptian enslavers when they came to the Red Sea. God's mighty hand parted the waters, so that the Israelites could walk across unharmed, then sent the waters back so that the Egyptians could not pursue them. The lives of the enslaved people who conceived this song were unrelentingly hard, and they clung resolutely to the promise that God would deliver them, as God had delivered the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt, and as God delivered the sick man by the Sheep Gate. This song also may have been an encoded message for those planning an escape: either as notice that the plans were laid, or as direction on the way to run to elude those who pursued them.

# First Presbyterian Church

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**Pastor - Rev. Dr. Christina Berry**

**Ministers - All the People**

**March 6, 2022**

## God's People Gather

Welcome

Threshold Moment

Response I Want Jesus To Walk With Me

\*Opening Song Guide Me O, Thou Great Jehovah

Prayer of Confession

**O God, the sea is so wide, and filled with dangers: apathy, anger, bitterness, pride... There is much that overwhelms us, and we think sometimes that it would be easier to go back. We fail to trust in your mercy, and begin to think that we were wrong to follow you. We fail to walk in the path you have created for us, and we are in danger from the waves of cruelty, indifference, and selfishness. Forgive us, God! Trouble the waters of our hearts; stir up the pool of grace and help us to immerse ourselves in it, so that we may be healed and made whole. It is in your name that we pray.**

*Silence is kept*

Assurance of Pardon (John 5:24)

Leader: Jesus said, "I assure you that whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and won't come under judgment but has passed from death into life." Trust in the words of Jesus, who heals, forgives, and restores us to life!  
**People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

\*Sharing the Peace of Christ

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

\*Response Peace Song

**God's Word is Proclaimed**

Children's Time

Scripture Readings Exodus 14: 10-14, 21-23, 26-29; John 5:1-8

Sermon

## Responding to God's Word

Offering

**Sacrament of the Lord's Supper**

Invitation

**Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer**

Leader: O God, it is always right and good to bring you our thanks and praise! We lift up our hearts in thanksgiving for your mercy in liberating us, parting the waters and guiding us from captivity into freedom, from isolation into community, from despair into hope. Through Jesus Christ, his life, death and resurrection, you have freed us from slavery to sin and given us new life. So we sing your praise and ask your blessing:

**Response: As we gather at your Table, as we listen to your Word,  
help us know, O God, your presence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.  
nourish us with sacred story 'til we claim it as our own;  
teach us through this holy banquet how to make Love's victory known.**

Leader: Send your holy Spirit, O God, upon these gifts of bread and cup and upon us your people, as we join together in worship, study and service to share your liberating love with all people.

**Response: Turn our worship into witness in the sacrament of life;  
send us forth to love and serve you, bringing peace where there is strife.  
Give us, Christ, your great compassion to forgive as you forgave;  
may we still behold your image in the world you died to save.**

Leader: Even as you troubled the waters on behalf of your people, stir us, O God, so that our hearts may be ever willing to bring your healing to all who suffer. We lift up our prayers to you for all the world...for our community...for those whom we name in silence... and all these prayers we offer in the strong name of the one who taught us to pray saying:

**All: The Lord's Prayer**

**Words of Institution**

**Sharing the Bread and the Cup**

**Prayer after the Supper**

**Response: Gracious Spirit, help us summon other guests to share that feast  
where triumphant Love will welcome those who had been last and least.  
There no more will envy blind us nor will pride our peace destroy,  
as we join with saints and angels to repeat the sounding joy.**