

# PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

First Presbyterian Church, McAllen

January 17, 2021



*Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. Matthew 25:40*

---

## Welcome and Opening Sentences

- This is the third Sunday of January. We are again using the resources provided by Mission Presbytery for third Sunday worship. Today's guest preacher is Rev. Lemuel Garcia, who serves as the Mission Engagement Advisor for the PC(USA). Lemuel has structured this worship service around the three primary themes of the denomination's Matthew 25 Initiative: eradicating systemic poverty, dismantling structural racism, and building congregational vitality. You will see those themes lifted up in the elements of the worship service, as well as in Lemuel's sermon.
- What does the Lord require of us? To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.
- Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship.

## Prelude

## Call to Worship

Jesus says: Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**And blessed is the church  
that serves with the love of God  
to eradicate systemic poverty.**

Jesus says: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst  
for righteousness, for they will be filled.

**And blessed is the church  
that trusts in the grace of Christ  
to build congregational vitality.**

Jesus says: Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.

**And blessed is the church  
that seeks by the power of the Spirit  
to dismantle structural racism.**

Blessed are you, O Holy, Triune God,  
**and blessed is your holy realm forever.**

## Hymn

For Everyone Born, v. 1 and 5

Glory to God #769

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
for everyone born, clean water and bread,  
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,  
for everyone born, a star overhead.

*Refrain: And God will delight when we are creators  
of justice and joy, compassion and peace;  
yes, God will delight when we are creators  
of justice, --- justice and joy.*

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
to live without fear, and simply to be,  
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,  
for everyone born, the right to be free.

*Refrain*

## Prayer of the Day

Holy God,  
by your Word and Spirit,  
come and transform your church  
to be a living sign of your love for the world –  
where the poor are filled with good things,  
the dividing walls are broken down,  
and the dead are raised to new life;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

## Prayer of Confession

Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

**Merciful God, we confess that we have wandered  
from your way of truth and life.**

**You call us to share all that we have  
and work together for the common good,  
but we hoard up treasures for ourselves  
and deny others their daily bread.**

**You call us to set the captives free  
and seek justice for the oppressed,  
but we live in fear of our neighbors  
and hide ourselves away  
from our own kin.**

**You call us to walk in newness of life  
and to be witnesses to the resurrection,  
but we dwell in the valley of dry bones  
and keep silent about your saving love.**

**Forgive us, God of grace.  
Set us free from sin, death, and fear  
so that we may serve you with gladness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

*A moment of silent prayer.*



John Stennett; *Closer*

## Declaration of Forgiveness

Hear the good news:

God's love has been poured into our hearts  
through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ,  
we are forgiven.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Doxology / Gloria Patri

## Passing the Peace of Christ

The peace of our Lord be with you all. / **And also with you.**

## Anthem

*Jesus, Be With Us*

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/Jesus-Be-with-Us-083120.mp3>

## Prayer for Illumination

Speak to us, O God, with the voice of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may know the way of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Gospel Reading

Matthew 19: 16-30; 25: 34-40

Then someone came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" <sup>17</sup> And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." <sup>18</sup> He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; <sup>19</sup> Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>20</sup> The young man said to him, "I have kept all of these; what do I still lack?" <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." <sup>22</sup> When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

<sup>23</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup> Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." <sup>25</sup> When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, "Then who can be saved?" <sup>26</sup> But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

<sup>27</sup> Then Peter said in reply, "Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" <sup>28</sup> Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup> And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundred-fold, and will inherit eternal life. <sup>30</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

**Ch. 25** – “Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me; <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you gave me clothing; I was sick and you took care of me; I was in prison and you visited me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”



### Scripture Reading

Acts 2: 42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

<sup>43</sup> Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup> they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

The Word of the Lord / **Thanks be to God.**

### Sermon

God's Beloved Community

Rev. Lemuel Garcia

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f\\_FElSj2ao&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f_FElSj2ao&feature=youtu.be)

### Affirmation of Faith

from A Brief Statement of Faith

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.

**Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:**

**preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives.**

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

**In sovereign love, God created the world good**

**and makes everyone equally in God's image to live as one community.**

We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

**The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith**

**and binds us together with all believers**

**in the one body of Christ, the Church.**

With believers in every time and place,

**we rejoice that nothing in life or in death**

**can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.**

## Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

Jesus says: Ask, and it will be given you;  
search, and you will find;  
knock, and the door will be opened for you.

Trusting in Christ's grace, let us offer our prayers  
for the church and the world,  
neighbors and loved ones, saying,  
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We ask your provision for all people.  
Teach us compassion and generosity.  
Put an end to economic exploitation.  
Fill the world with your abundant life.  
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We search for your beloved community.  
Break down systems of oppression.  
Dismantle patterns of privilege.  
Establish justice and equality for all.  
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We knock at the door of your house.  
Gather us in as disciples of your way.  
Nourish us in faith and faithfulness.  
Send us out to share good news.  
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

*For what else do we pray this day?  
Please offer your intercessions silently or aloud.*

Living God, we ask, we search, we knock –  
answer our prayers with the power of your Spirit,  
who transforms our lives to do your will;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

And now, let us pray as Christ has taught us:  
**Our Father, who art in heaven ...**



# MATTHEW 25

**Eradicate systemic poverty**  
**Dismantle structural racism**  
**Build congregational vitality**

Hymn      Called as Partners in Christ's Service, v. 1 and 4      Glory to God #761

Called as partners in Christ's service, called to ministries of grace,  
we respond with deep commitment, fresh new lines of faith to trace.  
May we learn the art of sharing, side by side and friend with friend;  
equal partners in our caring to fulfill God's chosen end.

So God grant us for tomorrow ways to order human life  
that surround each person's sorrow with a calm that conquers strife.  
Make us partners in our living, our compassion to increase,  
messengers of faith, thus giving hope and confidence and peace.

Presentation of Tithes and Offering

Stewardship Update and Invitation to the Offering

Jesus says: The realm of heaven has come near.  
Freely you have received; therefore, freely give.  
Let us offer our lives to the Lord.

Offertory

Offertory Prayer

We give you thanks and praise, O Lord:  
You have created us in your own image.  
You have claimed us as your beloved people.  
You have called us to be a blessing for others.  
Use the gifts of your good creation  
and the works of our hands  
to lift up the oppressed,  
break down dividing walls,  
and build up your church;  
all in the name and for the sake  
of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.



The Life of the Church

## Charge and Benediction

Jesus says: Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.  
Let us live in the light and hope and purpose  
of that promise.

The God who was and is and is to come  
is with us in Christ Jesus.

The blessing of the triune God  
be with you all.

**Alleluia!**

---

### **Today's Worship Leaders:**

Rev. Kathryn J. Escandell  
Ann and Ernie Williams  
Beverly Avila

Rev. Lemuel Garcia, guest preacher  
Ann Rowland  
Robert Garza

---

### **FPC McAllen Contact Information:**

Please send mail to:

P.O. Box 1029; McAllen, TX 78505

Because we are working from home, the best way to contact the staff is via e-mail:

Pastor: [fpcpastorkathy@gmail.com](mailto:fpcpastorkathy@gmail.com)

Church Administrator: [fpchurch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fpchurch@sbcglobal.net)

If the issue is not time-sensitive, you may leave a voice mail at 956-682-2836