

**First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca, Michigan
Service for the Lord's Day – Proper 15**

August 16, 2020

10:30am

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Maintain justice, and do what is right. God our Savior is coming soon.
Wisdom had prepared a feast for us; let us eat and drink of God's gifts.
The word of the Lord is like fire, like a hammer that smashes a stone.

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts. Give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that all people may know the glorious liberty of the children of God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Let us confess our sins without fear to the One who yearns to embrace us, forgive us, protect us, and bless us. Let us pray.

Have mercy on us, Lord Jesus; we are tormented! Our lives have been disrupted by the devil and by our own devilish desires and evil exploits. We are dismayed at your presence, anguished by the awful fallout of our own failures. We cannot take back what we have said or undo what we have done or atone for the agony we have caused. We are haunted by the past, plagued by the present, and fearful of the future. We shrink away from your gaze as strangers outside your circle of blessing. Yet the faith you have planted in us reaches out for your favor, returns to your presences, and hungers for your mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Our God kisses us with kindness, forgiving our sins, preserving our lives, and restoring our souls through the abundant provision of our Lord Jesus Christ. Receive now that for which faith has hungered: you are forgiven and healed in the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Prayer of Illumination

Merciful Savior, your suffering has saved our lives, secured our future, and restored us to relationship with God. Remove the shame and fear that cause us to come in your presence. By the power of your Spirit, open our eyes and hearts to your Word of love, mercy, healing, and blessing; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading Revelation, Chapters 17 & 18

Sermon

Prayers of Intercession and The Lord's Prayer

Invitation to the Offering/Affirmation of Faith

Words of Invitation and Sending

**Please bring your offering to the plate at the front of the sanctuary as you prepare to leave the sanctuary.*

Scripture Readings

Revelation 17

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great whore who is seated on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk." So he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication; and on her forehead was written a name, a mystery:

“Babylon the great, mother of whores and of earth’s abominations.” And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus.

When I saw her, I was greatly amazed. But the angel said to me, “Why are you so amazed? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the inhabitants of the earth, whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will be amazed when they see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

“This calls for a mind that has wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; also, they are seven kings, of whom five have fallen, one is living, and the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain only a little while. As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. These are united in yielding their power and authority to the beast; they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

And he said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the whore is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the whore; they will make her desolate and naked; they will devour her flesh and burn her up with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled. The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

Revelation 18

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor. He called out with a mighty voice,

“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! It has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul bird, a haunt of every foul and hateful beast. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxury.”

Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, so that you do not take part in her sins, and so that you do not share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her as she herself has rendered, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double draught for her in the cup she mixed.

As she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, so give her a like measure of torment and grief. Since in her heart she says, 'I rule as a queen; I am no widow, and I will never see grief,' therefore her plagues will come in a single day—pestilence and mourning and famine—and she will be burned with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who judges her."

And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning; they will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas, alas, the great city, Babylon, the mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come."

And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, cargo of gold, silver, jewels and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet, all kinds of scented wood, all articles of ivory, all articles of costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, choice flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, slaves—and human lives.

"The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your dainties and your splendor are lost to you, never to be found again!"

The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, "Alas, alas, the great city, clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! For in one hour all this wealth has been laid waste!"

And all shipmasters and seafarers, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?"

And they threw dust on their heads, as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, the great city, where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in one hour she has been laid waste." Rejoice over her, O heaven, you saints and apostles and prophets! For God has given judgment for you against her.

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying,

"With such violence Babylon the great city will be thrown down, and will be found no more; and the sound of harpists and minstrels and of flutists and trumpeters will be heard in you no more; and an artisan of any trade will be found in you no more; and the sound of the millstone will be heard in you no more; and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more; and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more; for your merchants were the magnates of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in you was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slaughtered on earth."