



First Presbyterian

CHURCH OF EASTON



A Service for the Worship of God
March 19, 2023

The Fourth Sunday in Lent

**Indicates an invitation to rise in body and/or spirit as you are able.*

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

GATHERING MUSIC

TOWER BELLS

PRELUDE

Ah, Holy Jesus (Hymn 93)

arr. Terry Osman
The Handbell Choir

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME

WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

Once you lived in darkness.

Now the light of God shines upon us.

Find what is pleasing to God and follow God's ways.

The acts of darkness are left behind as we journey to God's light.

Thanks be to God who gives us the light.

Open our hearts to receive your light of salvation. Amen.

*HYMN 280 (V. 1-3)

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,

That saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,

And grace my fears relieved;

How precious did that grace appear

The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,

I have already come;

'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,

And grace will lead me home.

WE PREPARE TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

RESPONSIVE READING

Ephesians 5:8-14

Once you were in darkness, but now in the Lord you are light.

Let us walk as children of the light.

Walk as children of the light, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.

Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.

Let us walk as children of the light.

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them.

Let us walk as children of the light.

For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light.

Let us walk as children of the light. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Light of Christ, awaken us this hour to the glory of your presence in our midst. Shine among us in such a way that the darkness without and within may be pushed back. Help us to recognize our sin for what it is. Let us be honest about what we do in this life which is harmful, hateful, and hopeless. Enable us to behold the world as you created it to be, as you created us to be. Empower us to move from darkness to light, from sin to new life. May your light within us shine so that we may love you and our neighbors as we love ourselves. This we pray in the name of the light of all people: Jesus Christ.

Silent Prayer

Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The Apostle Paul declared our hope, asking the question: "Who is in a position to condemn?"

The answer? "Only Christ – and Christ died for us; Christ rose for us; Christ reigns in power for us;

Christ prays for us." Trust this Good News. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and set free by God's generous grace.

*RESPONSE OF PRAISE

Gloria Patri

**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.**

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READING

John 9:1-16

SERMON

Rev. Stefanie Muntzel

I want to walk as a child of the light.
I want to follow Jesus,
God set the stars
to give light to the world.
The star of my life is Jesus.

Refrain:

*In him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.*

I want to see the brightness of God.
I want to look at Jesus.
Clear sun of righteousness,
shine on my path,
and show me
the way to the Father.

Refrain

I'm looking for the coming of Christ,
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run
with patience the race,
we shall know the joy of Jesus.

Refrain

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

God has given us so many gifts in Christ and in creation. We offer our gifts in gratitude for the possibilities we enjoy, trusting God to multiply what we bring for goodness' sake.

Please leave your offering in the box at the front of the sanctuary or make your gifts online or via mail.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Lord God, we offer our gifts in thanksgiving for all the goodness you provide. Bless our gifts and our lives so that we become a source of goodness for others, in the name of Christ, our strength and our hope. Amen.

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

This prayer is adapted from one used by the Corrymeela Community in Ballycastle, Northern Ireland and another by Grace Clunie of Armagh, Northern Ireland. It draws on the Celtic tradition of the caim, or encircling, prayer that may be familiar in the blessing of St. Patrick. It also bears resemblance to the Native American "Blessing to the Four Directions." The "Prayer in Six Directions" is an embodied prayer. Participants turn in a different direction with each section of the prayer.

East

God, our Creator, we thank you for the gift of our lives, and your mercies that are new every morning. We thank you for the hope of new opportunities and the grace of new beginnings.

South

Christ, our Redeemer, we praise you for your light which shines brighter than the sun. We give thanks for those who shine your light in the world, who warm our hearts with their love, and who help us to grow into the people you created us to be.

West

Holy Spirit, our Sustainer, we thank you for your constant presence even amid life's endings and closures. Help us see beauty in these sunsets and to trust you for the future.

North

Holy Spirit, our Comforter, we thank you for your love that encircles us when life is marked by difficulty or despair. Hold us in our sorrow, and restore in us the joy of your salvation.

Ground

Christ, our brother, we praise you who, in humility, shared our human condition. We thank you for the earth we call home, the forebears who give us our history, and daily provision of sustenance for body, mind, and spirit.

Sky

Triune God, Holy Mystery, we praise you in wonder and love. Help us to dream new dreams and envision a world marked by your justice, peace, and love.

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.

WE GO IN GOD'S NAME

*HYMN 394 (V. 1-3)

There Is a Balm in Gilead

Refrain:

*There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole.
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.*

Sometimes I feel discouraged,
And think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit
Revives my soul again.
Refrain

Don't ever feel discouraged,
For Jesus is your friend,
And if you lack for knowledge
He'll not refuse to lend.
Refrain

If you cannot preach like Peter,
If you cannot pray like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus
And say, "He died for all."
Refrain

*BENEDICTION

As we journey through the season of Lent, remember the words of the prophet Micah:
What does the Lord require of us? To do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.

May God's loving kindness comfort you, God's justice inspire you, and Jesus walk beside you in humility and hope.

POSTLUDE

Ah, Holy Jesus

Brahms

The flowers this morning are offered in thanksgiving for the beginning of Spring.

*All beautiful the march of days, as seasons come and go;
The hand that shaped the rose hath wrought the crystal of the snow;
Hath sent the hoary frost of heaven, the flowing water sealed,
And laid a silent loveliness on hill and wood and field.*

*O Thou from whose unfathomed law the year in beauty flows,
Thyself the vision passing by in crystal and in rose,
Day unto day doth utter speech, and night to night proclaim,
In ever changing words of light, the wonders of Thy name.*

-Hymn 292, Vs. 1 and 3. Frances Whitmarsh Wile, 1911

Worship Leaders

Rev. Stefanie Muntzel

Gloria Snyder, Organist

Elizabeth Campbell, Chancel Choir Director

The Chancel Choir

Noralee Manzek, Liturgist

Tech Support: Jacob Van Norman, Bill Bartlett, Rich Linnell, Pat Koefoed, Luke McGloughlin

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Each Sunday we sing hymns taken from the blue hymnal provided for you in the pew where you are seated. Though we print the lyrics to the hymns in the bulletin, we encourage you to turn to the hymnal so you can also read the accompanying music.

John 9:1-16

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.' Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided.