



THE WORSHIP OF GOD

Fayetteville First United

Methodist Church

Ash Wednesday

February 17, 2021

6:30 p.m.

ASH WEDNESDAY ORDER OF WORSHIP

GREETING

The Rev. Allyson Lawrence
Associate Minister

MUSICAL CALL TO WORSHIP

*CALL TO WORSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin and **People**
Senior Minister

**O God. You freely and abundantly pour out your spirit of grace and love.
Deliver us from cold hearts and wandering thoughts,
that with burning zeal and steady minds we may worship you in spirit and truth. Amen.** ^[1]

*PSALM 51:1-5

The sacrifice you accept, O God, is a humble spirit.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your loving kindness; in your compassion, blot out my offenses.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

I know full well my misdeeds, and my sin is ever before me.
Against you, against you only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight. *Refrain*

You look for truth in my inmost being, and teach me wisdom in my heart.
Purify me that I may be clean, wash me, make me whiter than snow.

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. *Refrain*

Deliver me from death, O God, my Savior, that my tongue may sing your justice.
O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

You have no delight in sacrifices, a burnt offering from me would not please you,
the sacrifice you accept is a humble spirit; a broken, contrite heart you will not reject. *Refrain*

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen. ^[2]

*PRAYER

Dr. Martin and **People**

**Our hearts long for your cleansing touch, Merciful One.
In your grace, wipe away our guilt, and renew our spirits,
that we may serve you with joy all our days. Amen.**

ISAIAH 58:1-5

Dr. Martin

“Shout it aloud, do not hold back.
Raise your voice like a trumpet.

Declare to my people their rebellion
and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.
²For day after day they seek me out;
they seem eager to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that does what is right
and has not forsaken the commands of its God.
They ask me for just decisions
and seem eager for God to come near them.
³‘Why have we fasted,’ they say,
‘and you have not seen it?
Why have we humbled ourselves,
and you have not noticed?’
“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.
⁴Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,
and in striking each other with wicked fists.
You cannot fast as you do today
and expect your voice to be heard on high.
⁵Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for people to humble themselves?
Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord? ¹³¹

***PRAYER**

Dr. Martin and **People**

**Examine me, O God, and know my heart; test me and discover my thoughts,
and lead me in the way everlasting. Amen. ¹⁴¹**

ISAIAH 58:6-12, 14B

Rev. Lawrence

⁶“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
⁷Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?
⁸Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.
⁹Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.
“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
¹⁰and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,

then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.

¹¹ The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.

¹² Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.” ¹⁵

¹⁴ For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

***PRAYER**

Rev. Lawrence and **People**

Renewing God, trusting in your infinite grace,

we confess that we need your healing and your forgiveness.

For all that is broken in our minds and bodies, **we ask your healing.**

For all that is amiss in our choices and our relationships, **we ask your forgiveness.**

For all that works against life and blessing in our hearts, and in the world,

we open ourselves to you transforming grace.

Heal us, forgive us, and make us new. Amen. ^[6]

***HYMN**

Where Charity and Love Prevail

ST. PETER

Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found;
brought here together by Christ's love, by love are we thus bound.

With grateful joy and holy fear true charity we learn;
let us with heart and mind and strength now love Christ in return.

Forgive we now each other's faults as we our faults confess;
and let us love each other well in Christian holiness.

Let strife among us be unknown, let all contention cease;
be Christ the glory that we seek, be ours his holy peace.

Let us recall that in our midst dwells God's begotten Son;
as members of his body joined, we are in him made one.

Love can exclude no race or creed if honored be God's name;
our common life embraces all whose Maker is the same. ¹⁷

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

¹² At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³ and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. ^[8]

MEDITATION

Rev. Lawrence

***INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF LENTEN DISCIPLINE**Rev. Lawrence and **People**

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now bow before the Lord, our maker and redeemer. **Amen.** ^[9]

PRAYER OF RELEASE AND THANKSGIVING

Rev. Lawrence

It is customary, Lord
to give something up
during the season of Lent.
What would you have me do without?
I who have so much.
Chocolate?
Cream cakes?
Alcohol?
Sweets?
Swearing?
The list is endless
and I could give up all those things
for the span of 40 days
quite easily and almost painlessly.
But what difference would it make
other than making me feel 'holier'
than my friend who makes no such sacrifice?
What would you have me do without?
I who have so much
Selfishness?
Conceit?
Envy?
Pride?
I fear before I ask,
that the answer might be 'yes'
and the giving up
would be all too real, Lord.

It would be difficult,
painful,
sacrificial,
a real cross to carry for 40 days,
and more? ¹¹⁰

RELEASE

Congregation is invited to write what is desired to be released (possibly a particular wrong doing, hurtful or action, feeling, or thought) on their dissolvable paper and place it in bowl at front.

Loving Father,
all the fancy words
in the world,
expressed in eloquent prose,
decorated with emotion,
spoken with conviction,
cannot compete with a heartfelt
'sorry'
when all other words fail.
There are times
when we are all too aware
of our limitations,
conscious of sin,
and the distance it creates between us.
Sometimes 'sorry'
is all the heart can bear to say aloud.

It is only you
who can read and understand
the language of our hearts,
only you who can translate our 'sorry'
into the prayer we would have prayed,
if we had the words within us.
Then you forgive,
and having forgiven
surround us in an embrace of love,
drawing us close to your heart,
as it was always meant to be.
Thank you, Loving Father,
that you listen to hearts,
as well as voices
Thank you. ¹¹¹

*** THE PEACE**

Rev. Lawrence and **People**

Offer one another signs of reconciliation and love:

“The peace of Christ be with you.” **“And also with you.”**

PRAYER OF RENEWAL

Dr. Martin and **People**

Loving God, teach us to render to you all that we have and all that we are,
that we may praise you, not with our lips only, but with our whole lives,
turning the duties, the sorrows, and the joys of all our days into a living sacrifice to you;
giver of every good and perfect gift,
you created us and all living beings for beauty, for happiness, for one another.
With all our hearts we thank you God. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

May You Grow in His Likeness

Randy Vader, Jay Rouse

*Through Him who is able to keep you in His care,
the One who's always faithful to hear our every prayer.
We share His love and blessing that will not ever cease.
As we part from one another with his grace and in His peace.*

*May you grow in His likeness your life His alone.
May you find strength in stillness, may your heart be His home.
May your gifts be surrendered, may His grace mark your life.
Never fearful or endangered, may your riches rest in Christ. ^[12]*

***DISMISSAL**

Rev. Lawrence and **People**

God of the wilderness, be with us as we wander through the desert of our lives.
Keep us from running back to the safety of old assumptions,
and walk with us as we learn to live the life abundant. **Amen.** ^[13]

RESOURCES

- [1] Worship and Song: Worship Resources Edition. #52. Ancient Collects and Other Prayers
- [2] Upper Room Worship Book, #276. Psalm 51:1-17
- [3] New International Version
- [4] Translation from New Zealand Prayer Book
- [5] New International Version
- [6] Worship and Song: Worship Resources Edition, #93. Steve Garnaas-Holmes
- [7] Copyright 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House
- [8] New Revised Standard Version
- [9] Book of Common Prayer
- [10] John Birch
- [11] John Birch
- [12] Randy Vader, Jay Rouse
- [13] Worship and Song: Worship Resources Edition, #19. Donna Sinclair, ED



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