

REID MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

March 20, 2024

6:15 p.m.



2261 Walton Way, Augusta, Georgia 30904
706-733-2275 reidchurcaugusta.org

PRELUDE

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Dale Wood
(1934—2003)

*CALL TO WORSHIP¹

Rev. Nadine Ellsworth-Moran

The Lord hears our prayers and attends to even our most feeble cries.

The Lord knows the ways in which life can crush our spirit and take our strength.

The Lord will hear even the faintest heart when it calls out.

In the quiet, I meditate on your wondrous works, Lord, and consider all that you have done for me.

I reach my hands to you; I thirst for you like a parched land seeking the rains.

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you.

Show me the way I should go, I trust you with my life.

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground,

for I am your servant, O Lord, my God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION²

Rev. Boyd Lien

God of the exile and the wanderer, you are never far from our footsteps; you never abandon us to ourselves completely; you leave the flame of hope burning in the window that we might find our way home even from a distant land. And if we must, for a time, make a home in the midst of sorrow or tribulation, you will dwell there with us, too.

SILENCE

We hear your words in our hearts, but question their origin. We hear your requests on our lives, yet doubt our ability. We know your holy presence in the core of our being, still we press on and push you to the edges, crowding out your love with our own agendas and desires. We wonder why we feel hollow. Forgive us our lack of obedience, our faltering faith.

SILENCE

You set before us signs of the new and holy covenant. A field in the center of our enemies' camp; grace in the face of our sins; a way to rewrite our stories within your holy word; a word of forgiveness over our scarred and mercurial souls. We come empty-handed and you take our hands in yours.

SILENCE

Oh, how we boast, Lord. How we recall our good deeds and draw attention to our piety; How we point to others and judge them, but neglect to name our own sins. Remind us, again, that we have no place being prideful, we have no reason for vanity, we have no works that will save us. Only you. You are the hope and salvation we can never merit, yet still — somehow — receive.

DECLARATION OF PARDON

God in his mercy speaks forgiveness over you, draws you forth into life and peace, and makes real the hope that you, and all creation, be released from the bondage to sin and obtain the freedom of the glory of the beloved children of God,

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

He Was Despised (from *Messiah*)
Jan Markle, Soloist

George Frideric Handel
(1685—1759)

SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 32:1-9

SILENCE

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:1-10

SILENCE

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION³

Invitation to the Table

We stand before this table, that is not a table. It is a field in Anathoth - a hope, a promise, a yielding to God's call to listen and trust. We have before us a new covenant sealed in earth and blood and bread and wine - sealed in Christ who comes to offer us the deed to our home in the Kingdom and a place beside him. Come and receive your good inheritance this night.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us lift up our hearts to the Lord.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The Great Thanksgiving

...And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

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.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God has called us to journey for a season through the wilderness places; and so, as Jesus did before us, we will set out once more to wander in an uncomfortable landscape and wrestle with its challenges, that through the power and guidance of the Spirit, we may emerge ready to do the work of the Kingdom here and now.

For bread and wine, this place and this time,

Thanks be to God.

For the peace we are promised which the world won't destroy,

Thanks be to God.

For the hope of heaven on earth and the final song of joy,

Thanks be to God.

*HYMN 624

I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art

TOULON

BENEDICTION⁴

*All who are able please stand

Communion—Allergy friendly elements available at the door.

Music—Music is reprinted by permission through OneLicense.net
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¹ Based on Psalm 143

² Inspired by Jeremiah 32 & Ephesians 2:1-10

³ Source: Iona Worship—adapted for each service

⁴ Written by L.R. Knost



Hearing assistance. Hearing aid wearers with a "T" (telecoil) setting can now hear the service broadcast directly through their hearing aids. Others desiring hearing assistance may check out a portable receiver / headset.

Symbols of Lent

Ashes

Like each symbol that we will introduce over the season of Lent, ashes are a physical “thing” representative of an idea or theological concept. As George Doyle describes it, “we find that physical objects and human actions, in our experience with them through our senses, can directly convey the grace of God, in their materiality. The meaning of the sacrament is not something arbitrarily imposed on the object from outside, but comes from within, as God makes use of the “thingness” of those objects to convey the grace of the sacrament.”

Ashes serve to remind us that from dust we have come and to dust we shall return, our mortality, as well as our connection to creation. Ashes remind us of the suffering of Christ and the waving palms turned to cries for crucifixion. The ashes you will receive on your forehead or hands bear witness to the grace of Christ. The painting of the ash cross is also made with ashes mixed into the paint from palms burned from previous years here at Reid Memorial.



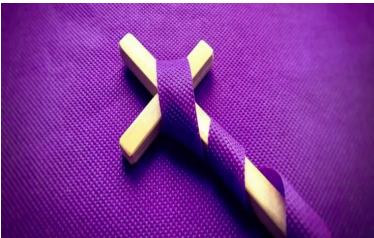
Water

The Lenten season is a time when we delve a little deeper into our faith and understanding of our salvation through grace. One symbol for this is water - the waters of chaos pulled into creation; the waters of covenant; the waters of baptism; water turned to fine wine; water for washing hands and feet. We add water to our table this week to symbolize this death and rebirth, this cleansing, and this provision that all point to God's unbounded grace.



Purple

During the liturgical year, we utilize different colors symbolically. Lent is no different, and its associated color is purple for a few reasons. First, it was the color reserved for royalty under the Roman Empire because it was the most expensive of the dyes. We also recall that before his crucifixion, Jesus was mocked for being "King of the Jews" and a purple robe was briefly set upon him. Additionally, purple is a symbol of our sins and reminds us of our need to embody an attitude of penitence. It is also sometimes thought of as a "sorrowful" color and, therefore, appropriate to the season.



Stones

In the desert, Satan pointed to the stones and said, if you are the Son of God, turn these stones to bread. In another story Jesus admonishes the crowd, let the one without sin be the first to throw a stone at the woman caught in her sin. The leaders of the tribes of Israel marked their entry into the promised land with twelve stones. The stone is the symbol of discipleship and perseverance in faith even in the midst of hardship, temptation, or the desire to judge others without examining our own lives first.



Fish

The fish symbol serves as a reminder of the cost of discipleship as well as Jesus' call to become "fishers of men." Persecution of early Christians led to creative and covert ways to communicate with one another. One such way was the drawing of the ichthus or fish symbol. The fish also came to be associated with the Lenten fast, as fish was consumed each Friday in lieu of animal meat in Catholic traditions. Our symbol of fish is composed of 13 outlines...one for each disciple as well as the One who leads them.



Crown of Thorns

The crown of thorns is the most visceral symbol of Lent as it represents the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The crown is a deep and poignant reminder of the pain endured by Jesus during his arrest and crucifixion and it tangibly represents the ultimate sacrifice made for the redemption of humanity.

