

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

March 6, 2024

6:15 p.m.



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

*CALL TO WORSHIP¹

Dr. Brandi Casto-Waters

Lord, your holy house is a place of belonging; how lovely is your dwelling place.

Here my heart rejoices, here my heart sings, here in the courts of the Lord, I am at peace.

Happy are those who live in your house, O Lord, ever singing your praise.

Happy are those who find their strength in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

For a day in your presence is better than a thousand days spent elsewhere, for you withhold no good thing from your people.

Let us worship the Lord, our God!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Sung response can be found in your hymnal #473

Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life.

Holy One, we are not equipped for this desert wandering, or at least we say we are not. We have a list of needs to be met, or maybe they are wants. We shout our virtues to the sky while our sins sift to the ground behind us, following us, until we finally realize that we have nothing to boast about except in You, and our sins, that are many, need not follow us anymore. Help us shed our old selves in this place of transformation. Help us meet our new selves by the well of living water where you wait for us each day.

Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life.

Lord, do not give us over to our pride and self-righteousness, do let us deceive ourselves with clever justifications for our actions or solicit accolades for our good works. Your living water finds its level and your light seeps through the cracks, so break our hearts, if you must, so that they may be healed.

Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life.

In the desert there are idols; yes, even here in the emptiness, in this place of transformation. We fashion together bits of twig and twine and call them gods; we lift up our narrow opinions and vain desires and we worship them. And from the heavens we feel the shuddering of angels and hear the weeping of the saints who cry over our foolishness. Lord, forgive us for forsaking you.

Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life.

You have dug deep wells in the desert for us, prepared an oasis of repose and safety, but we insist on our way and we fill our hands with sand and hold them to our lips, trying to drink. You have given us your unending presence and provision, yet we have put limits around what we will give to you. We have dug our own cisterns, broken cisterns, that cannot hold water.

Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life.

DECLARATION OF PARDON

God of all 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.

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 17:1-7

Rev. Ellsworth-Moran

SILENCE

SILENCE

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION²**Invitation to the Table**

Your name is written here; inscribed in the bread, poured in the cup. Your name is known here – God calls you to come. Come, to this table, sit beside me, he says. Come to this table and remember with me.

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 81

Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken

AUSTRIAN HYMN

BENEDICTION³

*All who are able please stand

Communion—Allergy friendly elements available at the door.

Music—Music is reprinted by permission through OneLicense.net #A-721337

¹ Based on Psalm 84

² Source: Iona Worship—adapted for each service

³ Written by Jan Richardson



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



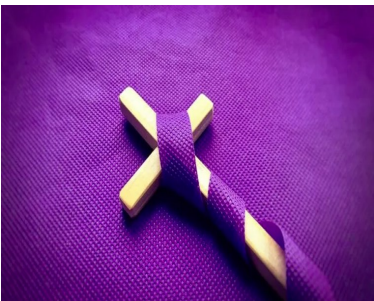
Like each symbol that we will introduce over the season of Lent, ashes are a physical “thing” representative of an idea or theological concept. As George Doyle describes it, “we find that physical objects and human actions, in our experience with them through our senses, can directly convey the grace 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 that 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 unbound-ed 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.