



**Order of Worship  
February 22, 2023**

**7:00 PM**

**Prelude**

*Cross of Jesus*

*The prelude signals the beginning of our sacred time together. During the prelude, you are invited to prepare your heart for worship by focusing your attention upon God.*

**Welcome**

Pastor Debra

**\*Call to Worship**

We are entering a time for questioning and reflection.

Tina Wilmoth

**We struggle with our questions and our doubts. May this Lent be a period of opportunity to ask our questions and lay our doubts to rest.**

**\*Opening Prayer**

Tina Wilmoth

**We have questions, Lord: questions for you, and questions about you! Use our questions, please, to bring us closer to you throughout these next 40 days, for as we open our minds, we open our hearts. Amen.**

**\*Hymn**

*Take Time to Be Holy*

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**Old Testament Reading**

Tina Wilmoth

**Isaiah 6:1-8**

**Isaiah's Commission**

**6** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. **2** Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. **3** And they were calling to one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory."

<sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

<sup>5</sup> "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

<sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

### **Psalm 51**

Pastor Debra

Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;

**According to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.**

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin!

**For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.**

**Against you, you only, have I sinned,  
and done which is evil in your sight.**

Behold, you desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

**Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;**

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.

**Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your holy Spirit from me.**

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

**Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.**

Deliver me from death, O God, God of my salvation,  
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

**O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth shall show forth your praise.**

For you have no delight in sacrifice;  
were I to give you burnt offerings, you would not be pleased.

**The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

**Ministry of Music**

*Gentle Spirit, Dwell With Me*

**Gospel Reading**

Tina Wilmoth

**Matthew 6:1-6**

**Giving to the Needy**

6 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

<sup>2</sup> “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>3</sup> But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

**Prayer**

<sup>5</sup> “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

**Fasting**

<sup>16</sup> “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

**Ash Wednesday Meditation**

Pastor Debra

**Invitation to Observe a Holy Lent**

Friends, today we are entering into a centuries-long tradition, a season of spiritual preparation.

What is old, becomes new for us now.

We prepare by looking in at ourselves – what are our questions, doubts, struggles, even sins?

We prepare by looking at our neighbors – how have we hurt them, harmed them, held them at a troubling distance? We prepare by looking to God – who welcomes our questions, restores our relationships, and renews our humanity.

No one is beyond needing God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness. And, praise God, no one and no thing is beyond receiving it. God is committed to loving every part of who you are – even the doubting parts, even the parts that are painful for you to face.

So, you get to make the decision tonight, as millions have made before you.

You get to say, "yes" to this gift of Lent. You get to say, "yes" to this gift of a season to get fully in touch with your humanity. You get to explore, dig deep, and ask the hard questions. You get to grapple with God using practices like prayer and meditating on scripture and fasting and keeping silence. You get to choose both if and how you will prepare for the transformation that lies ahead in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Will you say yes to this invitation?

### **Prayer of Confession**

**Merciful God, we stand before you fearful and lost, doubting how you could possibly receive us into your holy presence, especially when every word on our lips seems to be tainted, even our good deeds filled with mixed intentions. Forgive us, O Lord, when we fail to remember the depth of your mercy and grace. Purify us, so that we might recover the boldness to say, "Here I am; send me!" By your help, may we embark on our Lenten journey with peace and strength. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

### **Words of Assurance**

Let us rejoice in the Lord, in whom we have our eternal hope. For in Jesus Christ, our guilt has departed and our sin is blotted out.

### **Prayer Over the Ashes**

Pastor Debra

God, you made us – our beating hearts, our questioning minds, our yearning souls. We are dust and we are breath. Remind us of our limits and our potential as we receive these ashes today, so that our seeking may be bounded by your loving intentions. In Jesus' holy name we pray. Amen.

### **Imposition of the Ashes**

### **Words of Forgiveness**

Pastor Debra

Through the cross of Christ, God has mercy on you, pardons you and sets you free. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. God strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in life eternal. Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **\*Hymn**

*I Need Thee Every Hour*

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### **Your Lenten Journey Begins**

May God, who has forgiven us, now make us strong for these days ahead.

May Jesus lead us, and we be found faithful to follow.

May the Spirit drive us into the wilderness, burning away the chaff of our lives,  
and purifying our hearts for all to see and be blessed.

And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

Mercy, Master, and Fire,

Be with us and remain with us always!

**People: Amen!**

### **Postlude**

*Let the Word Go Forth*

## **TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY**

*Take time to be holy,  
speak oft with thy Lord;  
abide in him always,  
and feed on his word.  
Make friends of God's children,  
help those who are weak,  
forgetting in nothing  
his blessing to seek.*

*Take time to be holy,  
the world rushes on;  
spend much time in secret  
with Jesus alone.  
By looking to Jesus,  
like him thou shalt be;  
thy friends in thy conduct  
his likeness shall see.*

*Take time to be holy,  
let him be thy guide,  
and run not before him,  
whatever betide.  
In joy or in sorrow,  
still follow the Lord,  
and, looking to Jesus,  
still trust in his word.*

*Take time to be holy,  
be calm in thy soul,  
each thought and each motive  
beneath his control.  
Thus led by his spirit  
to fountains of love,  
thou soon shalt be fitted  
for service above.*

## ***I NEED THEE EVERY HOUR***

*I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord;  
no tender voice like thine can peace afford.*

***Refrain:***

***I need thee, O I need thee;  
every hour I need thee;  
O bless me now, my Savior, I come to thee.***

*I need thee every hour; stay thou nearby;  
temptations lose their power when thou art nigh.*

*(Refrain)*

*I need thee every hour, in joy or pain;  
come quickly and abide, or life is vain.*

*(Refrain)*

*I need thee every hour; teach me thy will;  
and thy rich promises in me fulfill.*

*(Refrain)*

*I need thee every hour, most Holy One;  
O make me thine indeed, thou blessed Son.*

*(Refrain)*