



## Who Is God?

February 26, 2023  
First Sunday of Lent

### GATHERING AND PRAISE

#### Welcome

#### Prelude

*The Old Rugged Cross*

*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.*

#### Call to Worship

Susan Whitman

We wonder—who is God?

**We wonder—where is God?**

We wonder—how do we reach God? How do we learn about God?

**We wonder---are the answers in loving?**

#### Opening Prayer

All Praying

Susan Whitman

**We seek, we wonder, we ponder the mystery that is you, God. We would like some clarity to cling to! But instead of the certainty we seek, your answer is an invitation: the invitation to love. Lord, we accept your invitation. On this first Sunday in Lent, reveal to us your ways of love that we might love more like you. Amen.**

#### Hymn

*Your Love, O God, Has Called Us Here*

UMH 647

View last page for words

#### Passing the Peace of Christ

Susan Whitman

#### Prayer of Confession

Pastor Debra

**“When we offer God our confession, we join the beautiful work of reconciliation.**

Compassionate God, in your unfailing love, you sent us your Son as the savior of the world so that we might live through him. And you have invited us to love one another as you first loved us. We confess that we have failed to accept your invitation. Too often, our fears over

our personal safety, financial security, and social status prevent us from truly loving those around us. Forgive us, O Lord, for our meekness. Give us the boldness to receive and abide in your perfect love which casts out our fears. By your strength, may we embody your loving presence out in the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

### **Words of Assurance**

Beloved, God is love. And God's love abides in all who confess Jesus is the Son of God. So let us be bold in the Lord by trusting and believing in the great love that God has for us all.

### **Ministry of Music**

*And Can It Be?*

## **PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE**

### **Prayer for Understanding**

*All Praying*

Susan Whitman

**We ask you, our living God, to shower onto us your wisdom and knowledge. We pray that as we listen to your word, we may have the ability to see clearly what you have called us to do. We seek to live to fulfill your words urging us to love others as we love ourselves. Illuminate our eyes and reveal to us your glory. Amen.**

### **I John 1:5-10 (NRSV)**

#### **God Is Light**

<sup>5</sup> This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; <sup>7</sup> but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. <sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

#### **God Is Love**

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. <sup>9</sup> God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. <sup>17</sup> Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. <sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us.

### **Sermon**

*Who Is God?*

Pastor Debra

Open my mind that I may read  
More of Thy love in word and deed;  
What shall I fear while yet Thou dost lead?  
Only for light from Thee I plead.

Silently now I wait for thee,  
ready, my God, thy will to see.  
Open my mind, illumine me, Spirit divine!

### **Preparation for Prayer**

*Open My Eyes, That I May See  
Words are found on the monitor*

UMH 454

### **Morning Prayer**

Pastor Debra

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

### **Offertory Invitation**

Susan Whitman

We do not give because we are certain of all the answers. We give because we have known love and we are called to love one another. As surely as the God of light and love dwells within you, give generously, fearlessly.

### **Worship with Our Tithes and Offerings**

*Offertory*

*Lenten Prayer*

*\*Doxology*

*Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow*

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;***

***Praise God, all creatures here below:***

***Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts!***

***Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!***  
***Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!***

*\*Prayer of Dedication*

Pastor Debra

God, thank you for showing us what love is and who love is. Thank you for the light that guides us as we try to be living testaments to your love, help us use these gifts to spread love's reach. In Jesus' name, amen.

## **GOING FORTH TO SERVE**

### **Closing Hymn**

*We Are Marching in the Light of God*

FWS 2235b

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### **Benediction**

Pastor Debra

May the light of God  
be reflected in your eyes,  
the love of God  
be reflected in your hands,  
the wisdom of God  
be reflected in your words,  
and the knowledge of God  
flow from your heart,  
that all might see,  
and seeing, believe. Go in peace.

### **Choral Benediction**

*The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve*

*We go to be the hands of Christ,  
to scatter joy like seed and,  
all our days, to cherish life,  
to do the loving deed.*

### **Postlude**

*Thru Faith*

## **YOUR LOVE, O GOD, HAS CALLED US HERE**

*Your love, O God, has called us here,  
for all love finds its source in you,  
the perfect love that casts out fear,  
the love that Christ makes ever new.*

*O gracious God, you consecrate  
all that is lovely, good, and true.  
Bless those who in your presence wait  
and every day their love renew.*

## **OPEN MY EYES, THAT I MAY SEE**

*Open my eyes, that I may see  
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;  
place in my hands the wonderful key  
that shall unclasp and set me free.*

*Silently now I wait for thee,  
ready, my God, thy will to see.  
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

*Open my ears, that I may hear  
voices of truth thou sendest clear;  
and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,  
everything false will disappear.*

*Silently now I wait for thee,  
ready, my God, thy will to see.  
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

*Open my mouth, and let me bear  
gladly the warm truth everywhere;  
open my heart and let me prepare  
love with thy children thus to share.*

*Silently now I wait for thee,  
ready, my God, thy will to see.  
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

## **WE ARE MARCHING**

We are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching in the light of God.

We are marching, marching  
We are marching, oh ohhh,  
We are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching, marching,  
We are marching, oh ohhh,  
We are marching in the light of God.

We are living in the love of God.  
We are living in the love of God.  
We are living in the love of God.  
We are living in the love of God.

We are living, living,  
We are living, oh ohhh,  
We are living in the love of God.  
We are living, living,  
We are living, oh ohhh,  
We are living in the love of God.

We are moving in the power of God.  
We are moving in the power of God.  
We are moving in the power of God.  
We are moving in the power of God.

We are moving, moving,  
We are moving, oh ohhh,  
We are moving in the power of God.  
We are moving, moving,

We are moving, oh ohhh,  
We are moving in the power of God.