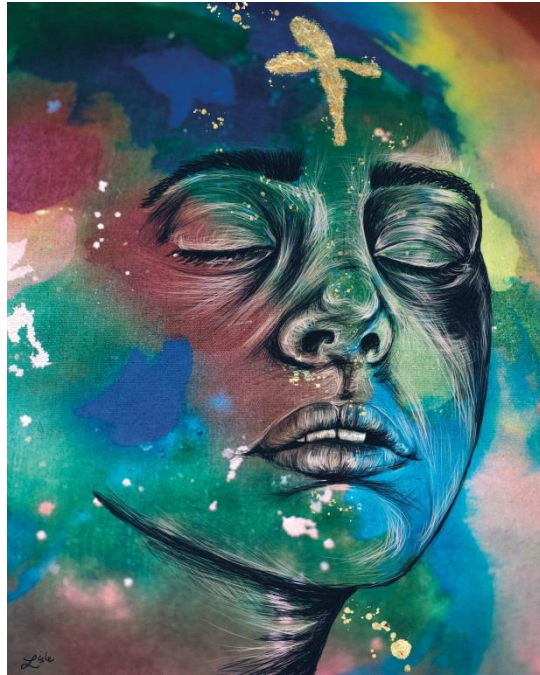


ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MARCH 2, 2022

GATHERING MUSIC

CREATE IN ME, O GOD, A PURE HEART
JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Reflective Text:

Create in me, O God, a pure heart
And grant a right spirit within me.

GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

“Even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart.”

Roll up your sleeves.

Let down your guard.

Come in from the storm.

Make yourself at home.

Pull up to the table.

Release the tension in your jaw. Take a deep breath. Return to God with all your heart.

May it be so.

Let us pray -

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of tenderness, and strengthen us to face our mortality, that we may reach with confidence for your mercy; in Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Loving Creator, we are here, telling stories of dust. We are here, trying to shake the dust out of our ears so that we might hear you clearly. We are here, hoping that showing up is the first step in returning to you. Scoop us up in your embrace and carry us to a place of truth. Clear the smog that makes it hard to see. Clear the dust that makes it hard to hear. We are at the edge of our seats. We are listening for you. Amen.

FIRST READING

JOEL 2:1-2, 12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near—

² a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶ gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged;

gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.

Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

MUSICAL REFLECTION

OUR DARKNESS IS NEVER DARKNESS IN YOUR SIGHT

TAIZE

JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

Reflective Text:

Our darkness is never darkness in your sight;

The deepest night is clear as the daylight.

GOSPEL READING

MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

⁶ "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

² "So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵ "And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶ "And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

SERMON

"FULL TO THE BRIM: WITH ALL THAT YOU ARE"

REV. ALISON PETERS

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in an expansive love that healed the sick, welcomed the children, and saw this world as it could be. We believe that that expansive love runs over the edges of our lives, smoothing our rough places, and pulling us home. We call that expansive love Yaweh and Mother God, Jesus and Divine Creator. Thanks be to God for a Love like that. Amen.

OFFERING

(You received a small slip of purple paper as you entered the sanctuary.

Please write a part of yourself that you wish to offer to God for this Holy Season of Lent.

Feel free to take this paper with you or place it in the Offering Plate to be joined with the other offerings of our congregation.)

OFFERTORY SOLO

CHRIST IN ME ARISE

TREVOR THOMSON (1971 -)

MIKAYLA DODGE, SOPRANO; JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

Reflective Text:

Christ in me arise and dispel all the darkness.
Christ in me arise with your power and your strength.
Christ in me pour out your blessing and healing.
Christ in me arise and I shall rise with you.
Showing me all that I must see.
Onward to the kingdom, you are the way.
Arise in me and I shall rise with you.
Taking me where I must go.
Onward to the kingdom, you are the way.
Arise in me and I shall rise with you.
You know my heart and you know my ways,
You who formed me in my mother's womb.
I live and move in you, my whole being thrives in you..

INVITATION TO THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LENTEN DISCIPLINE

CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Holy God, I confess: I don't return to you fully. I share with you the pieces of my life that are convenient. I put on different hats in different rooms. I forget that I am called, invited, and loved with all that I am— including my mess, my beauty, my faith, and my doubt. Forgive me, and give me a heart that longs to return.

Many: Friend, God sees you. God hears you. God loves you. You are forgiven and claimed with all that you are. Rest in that good news.

One: Thanks be to God, amen.

Many: Holy God, we confess: we don't return to you fully. We share with you the pieces of our lives that are convenient. We put on different hats in different rooms. We forget that we are called, invited, and loved with all that we are—including our mess, our beauty, our faith, and our doubt. Forgive us, and give us hearts that long to return.

One: Friends, God sees you. God hears you. God loves you. You are forgiven and claimed with all that you are.

Holy Week Services

*Palm/Passion Sunday, April 10th:

10:15 AM Churches on the Hill Gathering on Washington Street

11:00 AM Traditional Service at First Presbyterian

*Easter Egg Blessing Milestone at 1:30 PM at First Presbyterian Church - all families are invited to attend!

*Maundy Thursday, April 14th at 7:00 PM at First Presbyterian

*Good Friday Walking Stations of the Cross, April 15th at 12:00 PM
beginning at The Shrine of Saints Peter & Paul

*Easter Sunday, April 17th:

Sunrise Service at Rocky Gap at 7:00 AM

Traditional Service in the Sanctuary of First Presbyterian at 11:00 AM