✟ Offertory Prayer *of* Dedication *and* Thanksgiving

Prayers *of* the People *(responsively)*

Liturgist: …The Lord be with you.
People: **And also with you.**

Liturgist: …Lord, in Your mercy:
People: **hear our prayer…**

concluding with The Lord's Prayer *(in unison)* *from Matthew 6.9b-13*

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
[For Thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever. *Amen.*]

✟ Benediction

(You are invited to bow your head and extend your hands for the blessing.)

— Sending Forth —

✟ Sending Hymn: No. 404 *(All sing)* PENTECOST

Every Time I Feel the Spirit

(Refrain: SATB parts & Stanzas: Unison melody)

To commemorate Black History Month, we celebrate the heritage of motivation, hope, and comfort found in the beautiful spirituals created by our African American brothers and sisters, in spite of the incredibly dehumanizing conditions of slavery and racism. "Spirituals reveal prayer as a critical and normal part of daily life of the Christian slave…The omnipresence of the Holy Spirit in the daily life of the enslaved population enabled them to feel a sense of spiritual liberation and the power of God's love, even while knowing that they were the property of another human being…The Holy Spirit gives life and provides inspiration. This spiritual affirms that, no matter the circumstances, whenever the Spirit is 'moving in my heart, I will pray.'"

– from "In Their Own Words: Slave Life and the Power of Spirituals" by Eileen Guenther

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✟ Commission *and* Dismissal *into* the Mission Field

— Liturgical Lexicon —

What is Lent and why is it important?

Lent is an ancient and austere season marked by the spiritual disciplines of self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, self-denial and almsgiving, and reading and meditating upon God's Holy Word. This season commemorates the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert and enduring temptation by Satan, before beginning His public ministry. Purple, like black, is a penitential color, in contrast to a festive one. The forty days of the Lenten fast (which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday), uses this deep, rich color which has come to represent somberness and solemnity, penitence and prayer. Because Sundays are "The Lord's Day of Resurrection," they are not counted as part of the 40 days of the Lenten fast, and are instead considered "little Easters." (This is why Sundays are counted "in Lent," and not "of Lent.")

Violet or purple was a very cherished and expensive color in the world Jesus lived. The dye used to make the color was painstakingly acquired by massaging the neck of a Mediterranean shell fish that secreted a special fluid. It was therefore afforded only by the wealthy and worn most exclusively by the royalty.

Jesus, the king of the Jews, wore a purple robe only once. As the solders mocked and tormented Him, the Scriptures record they placed on Him a "purple garment" in order to ridicule Him and belittle the claim that He was a monarch.

Therefore, purple is used during this penitential season of Lent as a vivid reminder of the contempt and scorn Jesus endured, and the subsequent sacrifice He made for the atonement of our sin and eternal salvation. Ecclesiastical purple should remind all Christians of our daily need to humbly give attention to leading a life of confession and repentance.

During Lent, it is a custom to remove flowers and embellished decorations from the sanctuary and to veil crosses and other religious symbols in violet fabrics in solemn observance. This ancient tradition of "shielding the altar" (reminiscent of the veil that separated the "Holy of Holies" in the temple) from view until being reconciled to God after the Passover, at Easter. You'll notice that our altar credence retable is covered with burlap and vases of reeds and black sand, reminding us of Jesus's 40 days of fasting in the desert wilderness and our continual call to "repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42.6). Additionally, we embrace the somber tone of the season by omitting festive processions with the acolytes, instead, we fix our eyes upon the cross and are reminded of Christ's call to all His disciples to daily bear our crosses for His glory.

Our Lenten Banner depicts the cross of Christ in white, representing purity and innocence. It stands out against the darkness of purple, ash gray, and other somber colors reflecting pain, suffering, mourning, and penance. The two black crosses of the thieves crucified with Jesus are obscured by sin and pierced by the background. There is darkness above and below, but a shimmer of hope around the cross, found in the healing blood of Christ, shed for the redemption of the world.

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"To make and nurture Christian disciples through the presence and power of God."

The Lord's Day Service *of* Worship

The First Sunday *in* Lent

A cappella Sunday

Sunday, February 26, *Anno Domini* 2023 ✠ 08:30 & 11:00 *in the morning*

✟*denotes the People stand, in body or in spirit, as able.* *The People's responses are printed in* **bold**.
Thank you for silencing all electronic devices.

Today is the first Sunday in Lent. To mark the beginning of this important season of fasting, penitence, and preparation, we are joining with congregations around the country and the world in singing congregational songs *a cappella* (without instrumental accompaniment). By singing *a cappella*, we are offering to God our very selves in the most basic form. *Soli Deo Gloria!* Glory to God alone! (For more info about Lent, please see the "Liturgical Lexicon" on the back of your worship guide.)

–"A cappella Sunday" is a ministry initiative of The Center for Congregational Song
www.congregationalsong.org

— Gathering —

Silent Prayer *of* Preparation *for* Worship

Thanks be to Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ for all the benefits Thou hast given me, for all the pains and insults Thou hast borne for me. O most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother, may I know Thee more clearly, love Thee more dearly, and follow Thee more nearly, day by day. *Amen.* *– Prayer of Saint Richard of Chichester (1198–1253)*

Greeting — The Reverend Dr. Mark Conforti

Introit — Choir

O Lord, Hear My Prayer (Psalm 102) — by Jacques Berthier (1923–1994)

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer:
when I call answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer.
Come and listen to me.
The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: all my hope comes from God.
The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: God, the wellspring of life.

Text: Taizé Community; © 1982, 2011, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc.

✟ The Decalogue *(responsively)* *from Exodus 20.1–17; Deuteronomy 5.6–21*

Pastor: Hear these commandments which God has given to His people, and examine your hearts.
God spoke from the mountain and said:
"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before Me."

People: **Lord, have mercy upon us,**
and incline our hearts to keep Your law.

(continued overleaf…)

Pastor: "You shall not make for yourself any idol.
You shall not take the Name of the LORD your God in vain.
Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy."

People: **Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep Your law.**

Pastor: "Honor your father and your mother.
You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
You shall not covet."

People: **Lord, have mercy upon us,
and write all these, Your laws,
upon our hearts, we beseech You.**

✞ OPENING PRAYER *(in unison)* *The Collect for Purity*

**Almighty God,
to You all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from You no secrets are hid:
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love You,
and worthily magnify Your Holy Name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.***

CALL *to* CONFESSION *(responsively)* *from Psalm 103.2–3*

Pastor: Bless the LORD who forgives all our sins.

People: **His mercy endures forever.**

Pastor: You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways:
Draw near with faith and make Your humble confession to Almighty God and one another.

(Silence follows for personal reflection and private confession.)

CONFESSION *of* SIN

Pastor: Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Maker and Judge of us all:

All: **We acknowledge and lament our many sins and offenses,
which we have committed by thought, word, and deed
against Your divine majesty,
provoking most justly Your righteous anger against us.
We are deeply sorry for these our transgressions;
the burden of them is more than we can hear.
Have mercy upon us,
Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;
for Your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may evermore serve
and please You in newness of life,
to the honor and glory of Your Holy Name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.***

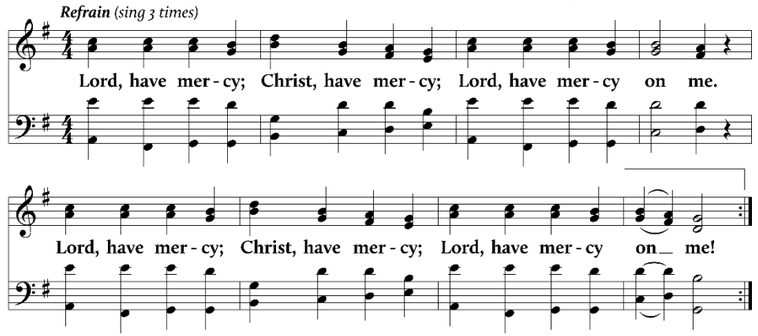
PROCLAMATION *of* THE LAW *Matthew 22.37–40; Mark 12.29–31; Luke 10.27–28*

Pastor: Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ says: "'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all you heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these commandments depend all the law and the prophets – for there is no other commandment greater than these."

People: **Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on me, a sinner. *Amen.***

(As we sing, the children are invited forward to be seated on the chancel steps.)

KYRIE, ELÉISON (All sing) *(Greek: "Lord, have mercy upon us.")*
(The cantor/choir introduces the refrain first, then All repeat twice.)



"Lord, Have Mercy"
Words and Music by: Steve Merkel
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— PROCLAMATION *of* GOD'S HOLY WORD —

CHILDREN'S MOMENT Bailee Weisensel

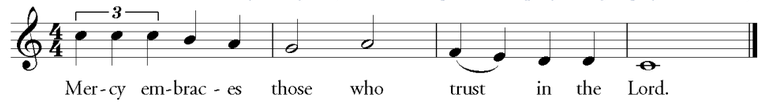
PRAYER *for* ILLUMINATION *(in unison)* Peggy Price | Terri Carnes, *liturgists*

**O God our Deliverer,
You led Your people of old through the wilderness
and brought them to the Promised Land.
By Your Word and Holy Spirit,
guide now the people of Your Church, that,
following our Savior,
we may walk through the wilderness of this world
toward the glory of the world to come;
Through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit:
One God, now and forever. *Amen.***

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON **Leviticus 19.9–18** Pew Bible: OT, *p. 106*

Lector: ...This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

GRADUAL PSALMODY **Psalm 32:** *Beati, quorum* Pew Bible: OT, *pp. 506 - 07*
(The cantor introduces the refrain first, then All repeat as signified by uplifted hand.)

EPISTLE LESSON **1 Timothy 2.1–8** Pew Bible: *NT, p. 208*

Lector: ...This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

✞ TRACT HYMN: NO. **357** *(All sing, as noted)* WOODWORTH
Just As I Am, Without One Plea
(Stanza 1: Cantor solo; Stanzas 2–6: All sing)

✞ GOSPEL LESSON **Matthew 4.1–11** Pew Bible: *NT, p. 3*

Preacher: ...This is the Word of God for the people of God.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

— RESPONSE *to* GOD'S HOLY WORD —

✞ HYMN *of* RESPONSE: NO. **526** *(All sing)* CONVERSE
What a Friend We Have in Jesus

✞ AFFIRMATION *of* OUR FAITH *(in unison)* Hymnal, *p. 880*
The Nicene Creed

✞ THE PEACE OF THE LORD *(responsively)* *from Matthew 5.23–24*

Liturgist: Our Lord Jesus reminds us "when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift."

Liturgist: The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be always with you.

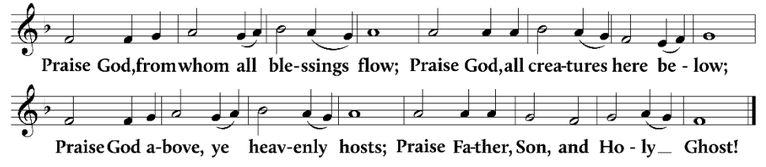
People: **And also with you.**

Liturgist: Even Christ was tempted in the wilderness.
Turn to your neighbor, who suffers as you do from daily temptation and let us offer one another signs of reconciliation and love.

(You are invited greet those around you with the words "Peace be with you;" before being seated.)

OFFERTORY HYMN: NO. **496** *(All sing)* SWEET HOUR
Sweet Hour of Prayer

✞ DOXOLOGY *at* THE PRESENTATION *of* GIFTS *(All sing)* HAMBURG



Words: Thomas Ken, 1674; alt.
Music: HAMBURG; Lowell Mason, 1824.