



REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ASH WEDNESDAY
February 17th, 2021

Explanation of Cover Art

“These lyrics from O Holy Night have been inspiring the final layers of this scene, “A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices.” I’ve been reflecting about the story of hope coming to the world through Christ in light, shadow, color and paint vibes. This scene speaks that story to me.” - Alicia Zaroni Lawrence

Explanation of Window Art

By Erin Hall

These tattered royal garments are arranged in structured community. From the perspective of one piece, they may be overshadowed or feel exposed and rub against the frays of another, but from afar even the tattered humble fragments show glimpses of their beauty in how they play off each other. There are many circles and intersections in our body, but one strong common chord. I was also meditating on the ideas of “casting anxiety on him” and clothing ourselves in humility toward one another; submitting to elders as part of the necessary structure: for each piece, if not tied in, would easily drift away. It is also such joy that our Lord sees our beauty now, and delights in us, even as we are.

Meditation

From The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis

Screwtape is a demon who is mentoring a younger demon, warning him about how the “Enemy” (how they refer to God), works in the lives of believers:

“Of course I know that the Enemy also wants to detach men from themselves, but in a different way. Remember always, that He really likes the little vermin, and sets an absurd value on the distinctness of every one of them. When He talks of their losing their selves, He only means abandoning the clamour of self-will; once they have done that, He really gives them back all their personality, and boasts (I am afraid, sincerely) that when they are wholly His they will be more themselves than ever. Hence, while He is delighted to see them sacrificing even their innocent wills to His, He hates to see them drifting away from their own nature for any other reason. And we should always encourage them to do so.”

Welcome

Call to Worship

From Luke 11:9-13

Leader Hear your King Jesus speak:
Ask and it will be given to you;
Seek and you will find;
Knock and the door will be opened to you.

All **For everyone who asks receives;
the one who seeks finds;
and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.**

Leader “Which of you fathers with your child,
if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?
Or if she asks for an egg, will give her a scorpion?”

All **Then, if we (who are evil) know how to give good gifts to our children,
how much more will your Father in heaven
give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”**

Leader When Elijah was fleeing for his life, confused and frustrated,
God asked him, “What are you doing here?”
In the gospel of John, when a few people started to follow Jesus
he turned and asked them, “What do you want?”
Let us still our hearts before our Master and our Healer,
and let his questions sit with us in his presence.
“What are you doing here?”
“What do you want?”

Silence before the Lord

Opening Hymn

"Immortal Invisible"

All

**Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most glorious, most holy, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.**

**Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
Thy justice, like mountains high, soaring above;
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.**

**To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all.
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish, but naught changest thee.**

**Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render, O help us to see,
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth thee!**

words Walter C. Smith, 1867, on 1 Tim 1:17; Welsh melody from Canaidau y Cyssegr, John Roberts, 1839; arr. Nathan Partain, 2011

Call to Repentance and Confession

Based on Psalm 131

Leader Father, your psalmist says:
My heart is not proud,
my eyes are not haughty;

All **But I think I know more than you,
your judgments seem too weak or too harsh,
I begin to think that you have a barbaric mind
and that I am more enlightened.
I find myself needing to edit who you say you are
so that I won't dislike you.**

Leader Your psalmist confesses,
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.

All **But I think I should be able to understand the purposes of my life,
the reasons for my disappointments,
my relationships, and even my self.
I demand answers when things don't make sense
and quickly accuse you of being
unloving, indifferent, unjust, and a liar.**

Leader Your psalmist testifies:
I have calmed and quieted my soul,
I am like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child I am content.

All **But I am guarded and skeptical,
I don't know how to trust you
or just enjoy you.**

**Teach me to say with the whole posture of my life:
You are God and I am only a creature.
You are wise and I am slow and immature.
You are loving while I change with the moods.
You are just, while I do whatever feels right.
You alone know what will lead to true life.**

Leader Children, put your hope in the LORD
both now and forevermore.

Song of Confession

“Bring Christ Your Broken Life”

All

**Bring Christ your broken life, so marred by sin,
He will create anew, make whole again;
Your empty, wasted years, he will restore,
And your iniquities, remember no more.**

**Bring him your ev’ry care, if great or small –
Whatever troubles you, O bring it all!
Bring him the haunting fears, the nameless dread,
Your heart he will relieve, and lift up your head.**

**Bring him your weariness, receive his rest;
Weep out your blinding tears, upon his breast;
His love is wonderful, his pow’r is great,
And none who trust in him, will he ever forsake.**

**Blest Savior of us all! Almighty Friend!
His presence shall be ours, unto the end;
Without him life would be, how dark, how drear!
But with him morning breaks, and heaven is near!**

words: Thomas Chisholm, 1935; music: Joseph N. Partain, 2009

Assurance of Pardon

Based on Jeremiah 31:31-33

Leader

Hear your LORD declare:

“The day has come!

I have made a new covenant with all of my chosen people.

It is not like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.

“This is the covenant I have made with the people of Israel,” declares the LORD.

“I have put my law in their minds and have written it on their hearts.”

All

He is our God and we are his people.

Leader

No longer do they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD’ because they all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD.

All

He has forgiven our wickedness and remembers our sins no more.

Song in the Gospel

“Lord Jesus Christ Be Present Now”

All

**Lord Jesus Christ, be present now,
Our hearts in true devotion bow;
Thy Spirit send with grace divine
And let thy truth within us shine.
Lord Jesus Christ, be present now.**

Scripture

Isaiah 29:11-21

Reader

¹¹ For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say, “Read this, please,” they will answer, “I can’t; it is sealed.”

¹² Or if you give the scroll to someone who cannot read, and say, “Read this, please,” they will answer, “I don’t know how to read.”

¹³ The Lord says:

“These people come near to me with their mouth
and honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

They worship me in vain
their teachings are merely human rules,

¹⁴ Therefore once more I will astound these people
with wonder upon wonder;
the wisdom of the wise will perish,
the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.”

¹⁵ Woe to those who go to great depths
to hide their plans from the LORD,
who do their work in darkness and think,
“Who sees us? Who will know?”

¹⁶ You turn things upside down,
as if the potter were thought to be like the clay!
Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it,
“You did not make me”?
Can the pot say to the potter,
“You know nothing”?

¹⁷ In a very short time, will not the wasteland be turned into a fertile field
and the fertile field seem like a wasteland?

¹⁸ In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll,
and out of gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind will see.

¹⁹ Once more the humble will rejoice in the Lord;
the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

²⁰ The ruthless will vanish,
the mockers will disappear,
and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down—

²¹ those who with a word make someone out to be guilty,
who ensnare the defender in court
and with false testimony deprive the innocent of justice.

Song in the Gospel

“Lord Jesus Christ Be Present Now”

All

**Unseal our lips to sing thy praise,
Our souls to thee in worship raise;
Make strong our faith, increase our light
That we may know thy name aright.
Lord Jesus Christ, be present now.**

Scripture

James 4:1-10

Reader

¹ What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ² You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

⁴ You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? ⁶ But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

“God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble.”

⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Song in the Gospel

“Lord Jesus Christ Be Present Now”

All

**Until we join the hosts that cry,
“Holy art thou, O Lord, Most High!”
And in the light of that blest place
Fore’er behold thee face to face.
Lord Jesus Christ, be present now.**

**Glory to God the Father, Son
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To thee, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise throughout eternity!
Lord Jesus Christ, be present now.**

words Duke Wilhelm II, 1651; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; music Nathan Partain, 2001

Scripture

Matthew 16:21-27

Reader

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

Reader

This is the word of the Lord.

All

Thanks be to God.

Homily

Sam Haist

Prayers of the People

Leader

Answer us when we call to you, our righteous God.

All

**Give me relief from my distress;
be merciful to me and hear my prayer.**

(prayers offered from the congregation aloud)

Doxology

All

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen**

words: Thomas Ken, 1674; music: Lewis Bourgeois 1551

Prayer for Lent

Leader

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes.
This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life,
calls us to heartfelt repentance,
and urges us to place our hope in God alone.

All

**Almighty God,
you have created us out of the dust of the earth.
May these ashes remind us of our mortality and penitence
and teach us again that only by your gracious gift
are we given everlasting life through Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.**

Benediction

Based on 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Leader

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely;
and may your spirit and soul and body
be kept sound and blameless
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The one who calls you is faithful,
and he will do this.

All

Amen.

Imposition of Ashes

From Psalm 103:14

Your Father knows how you are formed. He remembers that you are dust.

Questions for Reflection

What are my characteristic sins, and do I still hope in God and pray for change?

What idols have captured my imagination so that my love for the living God has grown cold?

Is there anything that I am holding back from God?

Relationship, Money, Plans, Dreams, where I say "No" to God's lordship?

In what ways is my devotion to Christ and His church less than wholehearted?

Am I building my life on Christ's free justification or am I insecure and guilt-ridden?

Have I done anything simply because I love Jesus?

Have I stopped doing something simply because I love Jesus?

Song of Dependence

"In Tenderness He Sought Me"

All

In tenderness, he sought me, weary and sick with sin,
And, on his shoulders, brought me into his flock again,
While angels in his presence sang, until the courts of heaven rang.

Oh, the love that sought me! Oh, the blood that bought me!
Oh, the grace that brought me to the fold, wondrous grace that brought me to the fold!
Wondrous grace that brought me to the fold!

He washed the bleeding sin-wounds, and poured in oil and wine;
He whispered to assure me, "I've found you, you are mine!"
I never heard a sweeter voice, it made my aching heart rejoice.

Oh, the love that sought me! Oh, the blood that bought me!
Oh, the grace that brought me to the fold, wondrous grace that brought me to the fold!
Wondrous grace that brought me to the fold!

He pointed to the nail-prints, for me his blood was shed;
A mocking crown so thorny, was placed upon his head:
I wondered what he saw in me, to suffer such deep agony.

Oh, the love that sought me! Oh, the blood that bought me!
Oh, the grace that brought me to the fold, wondrous grace that brought me to the fold!
Wondrous grace that brought me to the fold!

I'm sitting in his presence, the sunshine of his face,
While with adoring wonder, his blessings I retrace.
It seems as if eternal days are far too short to sound his praise.

Oh, the love that sought me! Oh, the blood that bought me!
Oh, the grace that brought me to the fold, wondrous grace that brought me to the fold!
Wondrous grace that brought me to the fold!

So while the hours are passing, all now is perfect rest;
I'm waiting for the morning, the brightest and the best,
When he will call us to his side, to be with him, his spotless Bride.

Oh, the love that sought me! Oh, the blood that bought me!
Oh, the grace that brought me to the fold, wondrous grace that brought me to the fold!
Wondrous grace that brought me to the fold!

words W. Spencer Walton, 1894; music Joseph Partain, 2010

Song of Dependence

"Take Me Further"

All

**Take me further, further than I've ever known, further than I'd want to go.
Overwhelm me, pour out more than I contain, more than my strength could sustain.
I am frightened, you will let me be deceived, you will tire of my need.
Help me know you, you are never false or harsh,
You are tender toward the broken of heart.**

**Make me humble, heal my wounded guarded soul, turn my bitterness to hope.
Give me wisdom, stretch my faith and confidence, worship through obedience.
Cross my boundaries, beyond what my zeal could last, do what I'm too scared to ask.
Lose my caution, lead me so far from my path,
There's no way I could ever get back.**

**Take me further, when I falter do not stop, carry when I can't go on,
Draw me nearer, I've no option, only you, make my one desire come true.
Jesus, you're my treasure, more than earthly joys or wealth, more than even life itself
Jesus, there's no limit, to what I'd lose if you I gain,
At any cost, come do whatever it takes.**

Nathan Partain, 2016

Song of Dependence

"I Asked the Lord"

All

I asked the Lord that I might grow, in faith and love and every grace,
Might more of his salvation know, and seek more earnestly his face.
'Twas he who taught me thus to pray, and he I trust has answered prayer,
But it has been in such a way, as almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour, at once he'd answer my request,
And by his love's constraining power, subdue my sins and give me rest.
Instead of this, he made me feel, the hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell, assault my soul in every part.

Yea more with his own hand he seemed, intent to aggravate my woe,
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed, cast out my feelings, laid me low.
Lord why is this, I trembling cried, wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?
"Tis in this way" the Lord replied, "I answer prayer for grace and faith."

"These inward trials I employ, from self and pride to set thee free,
And break thy schemes of earthly joy, that thou mayest seek thy all in me,
That thou mayest seek thy all in me."

©2004 double v music (ASCAP); words: John Newton (alt. Laura Taylor); music: Laura Taylor

Song of Dependence

"In the Secret of His Presence"

All

In the secret of his presence, how my soul delights to hide!
Oh, how precious are the lessons, which I learn at Jesus' side!
Earthly cares do ever vex me, and my trials lay me low;
But when Satan comes to tempt me, to the secret place I go,
To the secret place I go.

When my soul is faint and thirsty, 'neath the shadow of his wing,
There is cool and pleasant shelter, and a fresh and crystal spring;
There my Savior rests beside me, and we hold communion sweet:
If I tried, I could not utter what he says when there we meet,
What he says when there we meet.

Only this I know: I tell him all my doubts, my griefs, and fears;
Oh, how patiently he listens and my sorrowed soul he cheers:
Do you think he ne'er reproves me? What a false friend he would be,
If he never, never told me of the sins which he must see,
Of the sins which he must see.

And whene'er I leave the silence of that happy meeting place,
I must bring and bear the image of my Master in my face,
Of my Master in my face.

Words: Ellen L. Goreh, 1883 Music: Chris Minor, 2004

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