

*"Create in me a clean heart, O God"*  
*Psalm 51:10*

*Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023*



48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org)  
The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

## Sunday, February 22, 2023 ~ *Ash Wednesday*

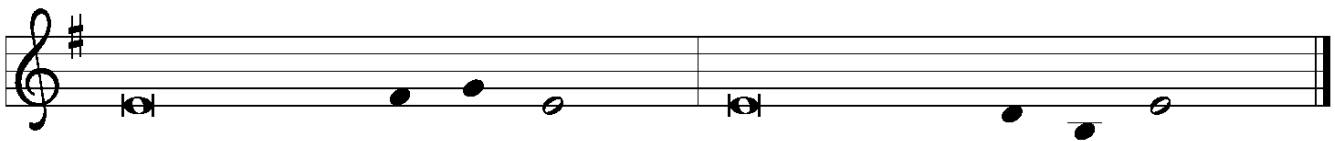
Prelude  
Cantilena

*A NEW COMMANDMENT*  
setting, David Blackwell

*On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.*

*Our worship begins with Psalm 51, a cry for divine forgiveness, appealing to God’s goodness, mercy, and compassion.*

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-17



- <sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;  
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.
- <sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,  
and cleanse me | from my sin.**
- <sup>3</sup>For I know | my offenses,  
and my sin is ev- | er before me.
- <sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil | in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak and right | in your judgment.**
- <sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my | mother’s womb.
- <sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear | joy and gladness;**  
**that the body you have broken | may rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face | from my sins,  
and blot out | all my wickedness.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean | heart, O God,**  
**and renew a right spir- | it within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away | from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.

<sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of | your salvation**  
**and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.**

<sup>13</sup>Let me teach your ways | to offenders,  
and sinners shall be re- | stored to you.

<sup>14</sup>**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of | my salvation,**  
**and my tongue shall sing | of your righteousness.**

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, o- | pen my lips,  
and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.

<sup>16</sup>**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or | I would give it.**  
**You are not pleased | with burnt offering.**

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit;  
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will | not despise.

#### GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with be with you all.

**And also with you.**

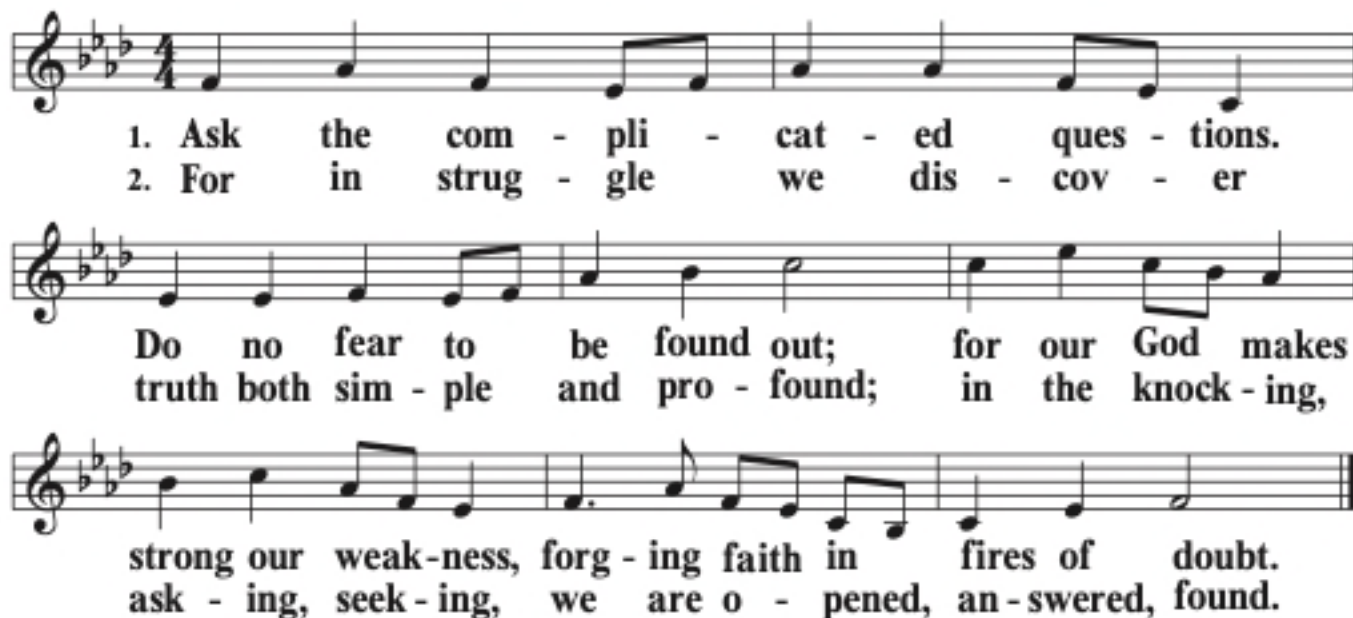
#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## HEARING GOD'S WORD

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



1. Ask the com - pli - cat - ed ques - tions.  
2. For in strug - gle we dis - cov - er

Do no fear to be found out; for our God makes  
truth both sim - ple and pro - found; in the knock - ing,

strong our weak - ness, forg - ing faith in fires of doubt.  
ask - ing, seek - ing, we are o - pened, an - swered, found.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.*

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“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.

<sup>2</sup>“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. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“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. <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>16</sup>“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. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash

your face, <sup>18</sup>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.

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

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## REFLECTION

HYMN OF THE DAY

Jesus, Still Lead On

ELW 624

## INVITATION TO LENT

### CONFESSION OF SIN

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from whom 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**

If we say we have no sin,  
**we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

*Silence for reflection*

For self-centered living, and for failing to walk with humility and gentleness:  
**Lord, have mercy on us.**

For longing to have what is not ours, and for hearts that are not at rest with ourselves:  
**Lord, have mercy on us.**

For misuse of human relationships, and for unwillingness to see the image of God in others:  
**Lord, have mercy on us.**

For jealousies that divide families and nations, and for rivalries that create strife and warfare:

**Lord, have mercy on us.**

For reluctance in sharing the gifts of God, and for carelessness with the fruits of creation:

**Lord, have mercy on us.**

For hurtful words that condemn, and for angry deeds that harm:

**Lord, have mercy on us.**

For idleness in witnessing to Jesus Christ, and for squandering the gifts of love and grace:

**Lord, have mercy on us.**

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

**Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

#### IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*People may come forward to receive the ashes. Ministers mark the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

*During this time, please join in singing:*

<b>HYMNS</b>	
Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling	ELW 608
Change My Heart, O God	ELW 801

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We pray for the world God has made, and for all people according to their needs.

Lord, renew your church in every place for the ministry set before us at this time. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Lord, renew communities and leaders in the work of justice and reconciliation. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Lord, renew those who are weary in body, mind or spirit. We pray for those we name before you . . . Lord, in your mercy.  
**hear our prayer.**

Lord, renew a right spirit within us and fill us with your bountiful spirit in this holy season.  
**Amen**

## SHARING GOD'S MEAL

### THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

*Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor.  
If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.*

### OFFERING

*Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting [blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry](http://blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry).*

### OFFERING OF MUSIC (evening service only)

If ye love Me, keep My Commandments

John 14: 15-17  
Thomas Tallis

The Chancel Choir

## OFFERTORY

## Holden Evening Prayer Psalm 51 vs. 4



4. Cre - ate in me a clean and right - eous heart, O God, put a  
 will - ing spir - it in my soul. Let me sing with joy a - new the sal -  
 va - tion found in you, sing - ing praise to you who made me whole.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Merciful God,  
**receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives, that following in the way of the cross, we may know the joy of the resurrection; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
 our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
 broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
 Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
 and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
 This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
 shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Jesus, you asked us to ask you for anything we need. So we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,  
 hallowed be your name,  
 your kingdom come,  
 your will be done,  
 on earth as in heaven.**



**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those who  
sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen**

#### INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Your questions are welcome. You are welcome. God wants you at this table.

**Thanks be to God!**

#### DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.*

#### THE COMMUNION



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

Just As I Am, without One Plea

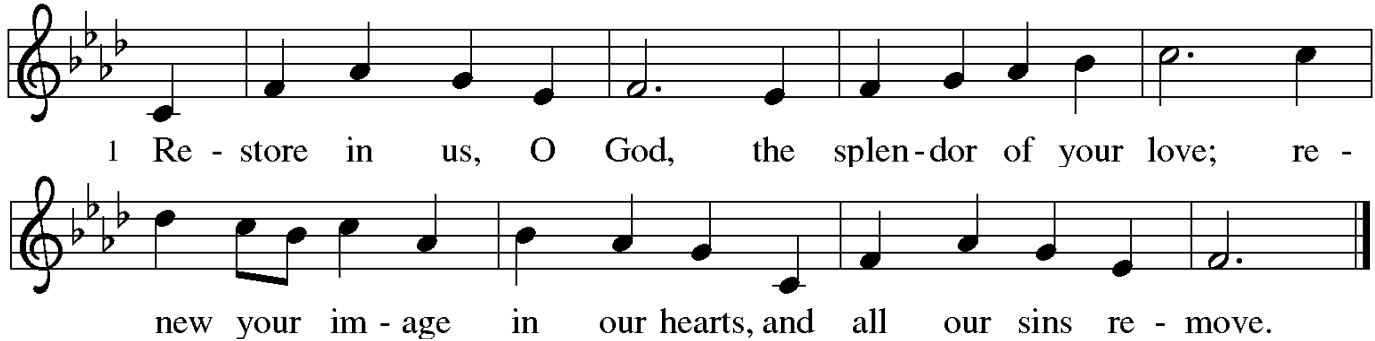
ELW 592

Thee We Adore, O Savior

ELW 476

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen - dor of your love; re -  
new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.

**LEAVING TO SERVE**

BENEDICTION

God, the giver of love, † Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey.

**Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

O Lord, throughout These Forty Days

ELW 319

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

O God of Mercy, God of Might

Joseph Barnby  
setting, Jeffrey Blersch

## **BLC Musicians**

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

**We welcome you** to this solemn service of worship that begins the season of Lent. Each Wednesday throughout the season of Lent, we will gather for a simple soup supper each Wednesday at 6 pm in the fellowship hall and share in worship at 7 pm. If you are visiting, please introduce yourself to one of the pastors – they would love to greet you personally!

**Communicate with us:** Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

**What's happening at BLC this week?** Visit the Calendar of Events at [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org). Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at [office@blcfairport.org](mailto:office@blcfairport.org) or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

**Church office hours:** Our co-Pastors are available Sunday-Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling (585)223-0634 or emailing [pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org) or [pastor.amy@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.amy@blcfairport.org).

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[Adapted by Pastor Amy Walter-Peterson and Pastor Abigail Hoffman.]

## **Hypocrites in Good Company**

Critics of Christianity often point out that Christians are hypocrites. Christians publicly espouse a certain set of rules for living—including care for creation, serving God and neighbors in need, and loving our enemies—and, just as publicly, fail to live up to those rules every day and in every way.

Pastor Tony Campolo often tells the story of people who say they don't want to go to church because of all the hypocrites. He reassures them that they should feel right at home. Church is for real people, and real people fail to do and say the right things—real people are hypocrites. Campolo argues that the Christian ideal is to know you're a hypocrite and earnestly work at being less hypocritical.

All the same, we don't want to be hypocrites or show-offs. We question the motives behind our public and private spiritual practices; we question our neighbors' motives too. In today's gospel we hear about fasting cheerfully and praying in secret. And yet, as we leave the church building we bear a public and very noticeable sign of faith right on our foreheads. Lent begins with a bold, visible, unmistakable reminder of who we are: simultaneously mortal dust and baptized children of God. Simultaneously saint and sinner. Simultaneously hypocrites and earnest, hopeful Christians.